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PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE ELEVENTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Thursday, 27 September 1990, at 3 p.m.

President:	Mr. de MARCO	(Malta)
later:	Mr. AFONSO (Vice-President)	(Mozambique)
later:	Mr. de MARCO	(Malta)
later:	Mr. MAVROMMATIS (Vice-President)	(Cyprus)

- Address by Mr. Cesar Gaviria, President of Colombia
- Address by Mr. Sam Nujoma, President of the Republic of Namibia
- General debate [9] (continued)

  Statement made by

  Mr. Abdullah (Oman)

  Address by Mr. Jan Syse, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Norway

  Statements made by

  Mr. Samaras (Greece)
  Mr. Maecha (Comoros)
  Mr. Malmierca Peoli (Cuba)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

ADDRESS BY MR. CESAR GAVIRIA, PRESIDENT OF COLOMBIA

The PRESIDENT: The Assembly will first hear an address by the President of the Republic of Colombia, His Excellency Mr. Cesar Gaviria.

Mr. Cesar Gaviria, President of the Republic of Colombia, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The PRESIDENT: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations the President of the Republic of Colombia, His Excellency Mr. Cesar Gaviria, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President GAVIRIA (interpretation from Spanish): At the outset, I should like to make a special appeal to all the countries represented here in the name of a country which has demonstrated its resolve to withstand the most cowardly and inhumane form of violence. I call on every one of you to make one last effort, an effort to seek a new formula and exhaust all avenues of reason and intelligence in order to achieve peace in the Persian Gulf. We must attempt to rescue thousands from the risk of death and desolation. If, at the end of the process, folly wins the day and the use of force becomes necessary, let it be clear that it will be because of the intransigence of those who resorted to violence and not because of a lack of will or generosity on the part of those of us who truly believe that the only worthwhile victory is the triumph of life and peace.

I would like to express my heartfelt congratulations to you, Sir, on your election as President of the Assembly. Your country, although a small one, has always played a key role in this institution. I would also like to express our gratitude to Mr. Garba for his splendid work at the last session. I would also like to pay a tribute to Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar, a distinguished Latin American, for his excellent leadership at the helm of this institution.

(President Gaviria)

Colombia joins in greeting Liechtenstein and the new Yemen, both sitting for the first time as full Members of this Assembly.

Each time that a Colombian Head of State addresses the Assembly, he has begun by reading a long list of names of important officials - young leaders, judges, soldiers and policemen - who have lost their lives at the hands of the drug traffickers. This list was followed by a call for concerted action by all nations to stand with Colombia against the drug scourge. We have made this call because Colombia has paid the highest price in this struggle. That list of names has increased significantly since former President Virgilio Barco spoke to this Assembly less than one year ago.

Today, I am not going to read the list. I would however like to tell the world that today the list is even longer and bloodier than ever. We still face very difficult days ahead.

In the course of the last electoral campaign alone, the drug terrorists assassinated three presidential candidates, including Luis Carlos Galan, my friend, and the candidate I was associated with as campaign manager. This is what has happened as far as our political leaders are concerned. It is, however, the civilian population, ordinary Colombians, who are paying the highest price.

The drug terrorists have placed dozens of car bombs in the streets of our cities. On the day we innocently celebrate as Mother's Day in Colombia, cars filled with dynamite exploded at shopping centres crowded with children. Many of them lost their lives. A commercial airplane exploded over Bogota because of a high-powered bomb placed under a seat by drug terrorists. The building which housed the administrative security department was entirely demolished by a blast of a ton of dynamite placed inside a bus. The terrorists offered to pay the sum of

(President Gaviria)

2 million pesos, almost $4,000, for each policeman killed. Close to 300 policemen were murdered by the paid assassins. It was thus that Colombians came to realize that our mourning would be more frequent than everyone else's.

In today's world addressing the General Assembly of the United Nations is a significant event in the life of any public figure. It is a unique and splendid opportunity to address all the peoples of the world. I believe that my commitment to this audience and this institution requires me to say something useful and meaningful. It should be something that adds to the experience of the Assembly, an organization endowed by its founders with the unique quality of bringing together all the peoples, all the cultures, all the religions that encompass and guide the human race.

It may be useful to recall the words spoken by William Faulkner 47 years ago, when he addressed the Swedish Academy:

"One should teach oneself that there is nothing more disgraceful than to be afraid."

Colombia is not a powerful country; it is not a wealthy country. Our wealth and our power come from the tenacity with which we maintain our democratic ideals and with which we adhere to the Charter of the United Nations. Our belief and our firm attachment to those fundamental values are our real strength.

Optimism over the inevitable advance of democracy and freedom should not, however, blind us to the obstacles to world stability.

With the abatement of the East-West conflict, which for more than 40 years hung over us like a spectre of war, it is becoming clear that peace does not depend on avoiding the nuclear annihilation of humanity. Today the conflicts and threats that hang over the world community are of another kind, one that is no less dangerous than the arms race or the overweening belligerence between the super-Powers.

(President Gaviria)

As the Secretary-General stated in his report:

"The Charter of the United Nations governs relations between States. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights pertains to relations between the State and the individual. The time has come to devise a covenant regulating relations between humankind and nature." (A/45/1, p. 22)

Colombia has one of the widest biological bases in the world. In our country there is unique wealth as regards the presence and variety of vegetable and animal species. We believe that that heritage is our own but it also belongs to all of mankind. For this reason, in the Orinoquia and the Amazon we have protected an area larger in size than Great Britain. But the responsibility and the cost of preserving the environment should not rest solely on those developing countries that still have the luxury of possessing vast forests and virgin lands. It is inadmissible that those industrialized countries that devastated and continue to exploit natural resources, within the framework of unbridled development, are trying to shirk their responsibilities. The industrialized world has an ecological debt to mankind.

There is on the horizon a dangerous threat of ecological disaster for the developing world imposed by those countries that are primarily responsible for the deterioration of the world environment. If we do not act soon to find more effective machinery within a multilateral framework, the question of the environment will become a new source of conflict between North and South.

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(President Gaviria)

Colombia will therefore participate actively in the preparation of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, to be held in Brazil in 1992.

There are other threats to peace and stability, particularly for the developing countries, and I am referring to the conventional arms race and the illegal traffic in drugs. Colombia has repeatedly stressed the latter because we have personal experience of the carnage it causes. We hope that next year the General Assembly will adopt the recommendations of the group of experts created at the request of my country, which is now working on this subject.

Nor can we disregard the significance of the deliberations of the Uruguay Round of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT).

We hope that the developing countries will concede the liberalization of commercial services, telecommunications and high technology and that at the same time there will be a real opening up of markets for agricultural goods in the industrialized countries, which at present are scanty and not very significant. This imbalance could endanger continuation of the multilateral trade negotiations.

I am sure that at the World Summit for Children, at which so many world leaders will be brought together, with the signing of the final act we will give great momentum to work being done for children and young people throughout the world. My nine-year-old child accompanied me here so that he will be able to bear witness to the efforts that Governments and leaders are making.

The conflict in the Persian Gulf is the greatest threat to world peace in recent times. But paradoxically it gives us an opportunity further to develop détente throughout the world. If the world can stand as one in confronting all acts of aggression and violations of international law and human rights, by whatever aggressor nation, then we shall establish a precedent for co-operation that can serve to bring about stability.

(President Gaviria)

Our relations with the community of nations are constantly guided by the principles that guarantee civilized coexistence among peoples. Defence of and respect for human rights, the legal equality of States, the peaceful settlement of disputes, respect for pluralism, rejection of the use of force, and above all non-intervention and the self-determination of peoples - they are the principles that guide our international policies. They give us an active mandate which, as a clear expression of those convictions, determines our actions in the Security Council and in multilateral organizations.

We do not believe it is possible to build peace without pluralism, without tolerance for others' ideas. That is what we believe in Colombia, and that is why Mr. Antonio Navarro Wolf now serves on our Council of Ministers, while barely six months ago he was taking up arms and fighting as a member of the M-19 guerrilla group. Like the hundreds of former guerrillas of that now demobilized insurgent group, he has found in Colombia a climate in which he can leave the armed struggle without renouncing his ideals of social change. The seriousness of his commitment deserves firm electoral support.

I should like to recall that in recent times violence has knocked at the door of every Colombian and has sorely tried the character of the nation. Those who advocate violence failed to realize that our country would rise up in the face of adversity; that in the face of death and suffering, life and hope become greater. Colombians responded to bullets and bombs by voting. They went to the polls and overwhelmingly voted in favour of a democratic and peaceful country.

Drug trafficking may not be as tangible a threat to peace as tanks and combat aircraft, but it is just as real and no less devastating. It has become one of the worst enemies of social integrity and democratic stability. Sooner or later, we will uproot drug trafficking, but if the rest of the international community does

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not make sacrifices similar to those of Colombia, mankind will never be free of its ferocious grip.

A considerable portion of the billions of dollars drug consumers pay to dealers ends up in the hands of the drug-traffic terrorists who violate the right to life and threaten our institutions. But we have learned to give no quarter to organized terrorism. Drug trafficking is primarily responsible for violations of human rights in countries where traffickers are active.

The world community has been able to activate global co-operation to face possible war and to defend international law. We have in less than a month mobilized enormous war power from one end of the world to the other, and if we can do that I am convinced we are able similarly to achieve satisfactory results in the fight against drug trafficking.

No other nation has fought drug trafficking and its organizations more than Colombia. No other nation has obtained the results Colombia has achieved. In this long struggle, we have struck heavy blows against the drug traffickers and their terrorist structure.

A highly significant percentage of all cocaine seized and destroyed in the world has been the work of the Colombian authorities. This is reflected in the considerable increase in drug prices in the streets of this city as well as in the poor neighbourhoods of Washington, DC. At the other end of the chain, coca-leaf prices have plummeted below the cost of production.

As long as demand does not decrease in the developed world, there will always be more laboratories and the drug traffickers will become increasingly wealthy, regardless of their nationality. To be sure, there are some encouraging signs. The measures adopted by President George Bush against drug use in the United States are beginning to show results at middle-income levels.

(President Gaviria)

That is why, following inexorable market forces, the drug traffic is shifting towards other countries and regions, such as Europe and part of Asia. We do not want even to think about the consequences in Colombia and in high-income countries, such as Japan or the European nations, of a demand for drugs, such as that of the United States.

We have before us a great opportunity. If we take advantage of the current low prices of the coca leaf to push for a massive alternative crop development, and if the world community acts promptly and takes harsh measures to break the other links of the chain, such as the laundering of dollars, the traffic in precursor chemical products and weapons, and increased consumption, it is possible we may then be close to adopting a policy capable of putting an end to this phenomenon.

Colombia actively promotes initiatives which seek concerted international action against the laundering of dollars and the trade in the dangerous precursor chemicals used in the processing of cocaine. We support the call for world conferences to address these important issues in the fight against drugs.

The war on drugs cannot, however, be the sole responsibility of one country or even a small group of countries. Drug trafficking is fed by a network of activities that cross every boundary on the planet and involves, in one way or the other, almost all nations.

No one is safe from this threat. Until we have definitively defeated this enemy all over the world, without exception, nobody can rest assured that his sons and daughters will be free of this vice and violence engendered by drugs.

Colombia considers especially important the creation of an international penal jurisdiction in the fight against drug trafficking. That is why we view with the greatest interest discussions on this issue in the International Juridical Committee.

(President Gaviria)

Drug trafficking is, then, an activity which requires multilateral solutions. It is not enough that the United States, Peru, Bolivia and Colombia - the signatories to the Declaration of Cartagena - are resolute in their willingness to face the problem. To be effective, all countries must be involved. No institution is better suited to the task than the United Nations. For this reason, we support the United Nations current effort to evaluate the work being carried out by its bodies in the area of narcotics.

(President Gaviria)

It is necessary to create a single authority within the United Nations with sufficient capacity to face the problem. We expect to play a leading role in such a forum, and we seek to participate actively, regardless of the institutional mechanism finally adopted.

In the light of the recent crisis in the Persian Gulf, President Bush requested and obtained economic assistance to offset the costs of the United States effort and thus help guarantee the effectiveness of the United Nations decisions.

Fighting an enemy even more dangerous to humanity, Colombia has received repeated expressions of solidarity, but very few real measures of support. While nations have demonstrated their economic support for the United States, on the other side of the world, Colombia, fighting against that other enemy of humanity and suffering economic and social hardship has, in fact, received no compensation at all.

It is time that repeatedly announced initiatives be converted into concrete actions. We are waiting for the European Economic Community to translate into concrete action its offers to help Colombia and the other Andean nations. We have been awaiting the adoption of the preferential trade system for the countries that signed the Declaration of Cartagena, also known as the Andean Initiative, and its prompt approval by the Congress of the United States. We hope, too, that there will be initiatives in this area by Japan and the countries of the Association of South-East Asian Nations.

We would like to see, within the framework of the Initiative for the Americas, the adoption of a special and speedy procedure of negotiations with those countries most seriously affected because of their firm stand against drug trafficking. Our military, judges and policemen know how to do their jobs. They have received minimal specific aid. We are grateful for that aid, but we insist there is a need for solidarity with the Colombian people, who have borne the brunt of this struggle.

(President Gaviria)

Friends of the United Nations, let us consider for a moment the role of principles in world events. In the Persian Gulf, the principle of non-aggression has united the most diverse countries in the world and consolidated the power of the Security Council as an organ designed to impose international law.

In Central and Eastern Europe, where emerging democracies experienced oppression in the past, freedom and democracy have blossomed into a revolution of great historical significance.

In South Africa, the discussions between Nelson Mandela, who was recently released, and the Government are opening a window of hope that the principle of the equality of men, regardless of race, shall prevail.

In Chile, millions of citizens said no to the dictatorship, and chose representative democracy instead.

In Nicaragua, the Sandinista régime honoured its electoral promises.

Throughout Latin America, the principle of democracy is being applied with new strength and vigour.

In Colombia, the people have faith in the future, and have turned optimism into one more reason to continue struggling for peace. We are the Latin American country with the most marked growth in this past decade, and we are continuing to grow. Our democratic principles, tolerance, freedom and respect for the ideas of others continue to strengthen in spite of attacks from violent sectors.

We are speaking about major achievements that seemed unlikely a few years ago. These are exciting times, when new leadership based on old principles is coming into bloom everywhere.

Within this great setting, and under the aegis of this Assembly, rests the responsibility of keeping this flower alive, of caring for its fragile roots and protecting it whatever the cost.

(President Gaviria)

As a tribute of my people, I bring the Assembly its affirmation of an ambitious and comforting rule: courage does pay off. Colombians are willing to defend their right to live free of fear. Colombians will never surrender their basic principles. Colombians will continue to defend their most sacred values in the face of violence, whether or not they stand alone in the world.

As I learned from the words of a peasant of my country, "The most beautiful flowers of the garden may be destroyed, but nothing can stop the arrival of spring."

The PRESIDENT: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Colombia for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Cesar Gaviria, President of the Republic of Colombia, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

ADDRESS BY MR. SAM NUJOMA, PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

The PRESIDENT: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Namibia.

Mr. Sam Nujoma, President of the Republic of Namibia, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The PRESIDENT: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations the President of the Republic of Namibia, His Excellency Mr. Sam Nujoma, and to invite him to address the General Assembly.

President NUJOMA: It gives me great pleasure to address the forty-fifth session of the General Assembly. At the outset, let me extend my heartfelt congratulations to you, Mr. President, on your unanimous election and wish you well in the heavy responsibilities entrusted to you. Your vast experience and diplomatic skill assure us that the work of the Assembly is in good hands.

I should like to express my personal happiness and sense of pride to your predecessor, General Joseph Garba, for the efficiency and wisdom with which he steered the forty-fourth session to a successful conclusion. He truly deserves praise by Africa and the world at large for a job well done.

The United Nations family was recently reinforced by a new Member, the Principality of Liechtenstein, whose membership my Government warmly welcomes. If I may say so, I had been looking forward to addressing the Assembly as President of the newest Member State of the United Nations. However, the Principality of Liechtenstein overtook us before the finish line. Therefore, as the second youngest Member, we take special pride in welcoming Liechtenstein and expressing confidence that it will enrich us all.

(President Nujoma)

The year 1990 has special meaning to the Namibian people. It is the year of the independence of the Republic of Namibia and, indeed, a momentous year for our country and our people as well as for the United Nations. The Namibian question has been a burning issue on the agenda of the General Assembly for decades as well as the subject-matter of many Assembly and Security Council resolutions and numerous international conferences.

It was the overwhelming desire for freedom burning in the souls of the Namibian people to free themselves from the yoke of apartheid colonialism that led tens of thousands of our fine young men and women to sacrifice their lives for the freedom of their motherland. Many more were imprisoned, tortured, injured and maimed in the process.

That sad chapter has now come to an end and we have opened a new chapter in our history. We now tackle the process of nation-building towards consolidating our hard-won freedom and opening the way to a bright future for all Namibians. We are determined to face the challenges in the fields of agriculture, rural development, education, health care, job creation and human-resources development.

(President Nujoma)

Full of hope, optimism and determination, we now dedicate ourselves to the arduous task of the socio-economic reconstruction and development of our country for the benefit of all our people. In this endeavour we are resolute in our desire to build stability and peace for our nation on the solid foundations of our fledgling democracy and the rule of law enshrined in our Constitution.

We are deeply conscious of the fact that this formidable undertaking will require hard work and political wisdom. But we are determined to march forward, inspired by the unity of our people and the need to achieve social justice for all. During the brief period since our independence, we have already been able to ensure peace within our borders, create confidence about the future among all Namibians, and set an agenda for national reconstruction. All of this we have been able to do in spite of the recent past in Namibia, characterized by racial conflict and war.

Our young democracy and multi-party system are steadily moving forward and giving our people hope that the political monsters of the past are gone for good. It gives me special pride to inform this body that my delegation consists of members of most of the political parties represented in our Parliament.

We, in Namibia, are blessed with a very beautiful climate, a large sparsely populated country with quite unique scenic landscapes. We have an environmental paradise which, by our Constitution, we are duty bound to preserve and treasure. Many of you here and many officials and citizens of your countries who visited Namibia during this last year can attest to this and many have in fact already done so by returning as tourists to enjoy all that our country has to offer.

We are heartened by the fact that the international community has given our Government a firm vote of confidence for the efforts that we are making in promoting the basic and fundamental human rights of our people, political stability and pragmatic economic policies. The struggle which we have embarked upon and

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which we are determined to win is that of national reconstruction and economic development. In this connection, we are confident that the plans we have drawn up to create an atmosphere conducive to foreign investment and to stimulate the recovery of our economy are sound.

At this moment, foreign companies are actively looking at existing or potential opportunities to do business with us. We have already signed agreements with a number of foreign and international institutions aiming at promoting private investment. Following the successful donors' pledging conference held here in New York earlier this year, my Government is planning to convene a private sector investment conference to allow local and foreign private investors to acquaint themselves with our development efforts and to explore the possibilities for joint ventures.

Being conscious of the interdependence of the regional economies, my Government joined the Southern Africa Development Co-ordinating Conference immediately after independence. In so doing we hope to make our contribution to the strengthening of the economies of the region by promoting trade, communication and co-operation among ourselves with the aim of strengthening the industrial networks in the region.

Like most Asian, African and Caribbean developing countries, Namibia is seeking membership of the Lomé Convention with the hope of securing beneficial access to the European markets for our agricultural products, especially our high quality beef. Our country's low level of development and highly lopsided economy make us one of the poorest countries in the world. For this reason, we are also seeking to be granted a least developed country status. We are pleased to note in this regard the positive decision of the recent least-developed-countries Conference held in Paris, which has recommended to the current session of the General Assembly that Namibia be granted such a status. I am confident that my

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Government can count on the assistance of the Member States to support that recommendation.

We are greatly indebted to the United Nations for the constructive assistance rendered to Namibia and its people in laying a healthy foundation for the realization of the well-being of our people. This truly collective effort of the countries of the world represents an outstanding achievement. This victory made it possible to achieve one of the fundamental objectives of the United Nations, namely, the right to self-determination and national independence.

On behalf of my Government and our people, I should like to express my heartfelt thanks to the United Nations Secretary-General for pursuing with great skill and determination the pledge he made on taking office when he committed himself to the earliest implementation of United Nations Security Council resolution 435 (1978).

I wish to offer our profound thanks to the United Nations General Assembly and the United Nations Security Council for the dedicated work done over the years in support of the just struggle of the people of Namibia.

(President Nujoma)

In this context, I should like to single out the men and women who served in the United Nations Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG) under the able leadership of Mr. Ahtisaari of Finland, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, and his deputy, Ambassador Joe Legwaila of Botswana, for their commitment and dedication in successfully accomplishing that historic and unprecedented mission.

At this juncture I wish to pay a special tribute to the members of the recently dissolved United Nations Council for Namibia for their tenacity in pursuing the mandate entrusted to them by the United Nations. The United Nations was able to sustain its responsibility over Namibia until the day of its independence largely because of the ardour and selfless dedication of the Council. Yes, indeed, the Council was truly a partner in the struggle for Namibia's freedom and independence.

I appeal to the General Assembly to ensure the successful completion of the remaining programmes of support for the Namibian people, including, in particular, the smooth transfer of the United Nations Institute for Namibia.

I recall from the recent resolution adopted by the General Assembly on the occasion of the dissolution of the United Nations Council for Namibia that the United Nations Secretary-General himself will be the custodian of the United Nations Fund for Namibia with a view to ensuring the completion of ongoing programmes and activities currently financed from United Nations sources.

In this connection, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General, in recognition of the unique and direct responsibility that the United Nations had assumed over Namibia prior to independence, to ensure the continued role of the United Nations in the reconstruction and development of the newly independent State of Namibia by providing the necessary resources and staff within the Secretariat for the delivery of such programmes of assistance. Accordingly, I appeal to the Assembly and the international community as a whole to sustain the role of the

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Secretary-General in this regard by providing adequate funds for the successful completion of all the programmes.

I should like to reaffirm once again before this august body our eternal gratitude to the front-line States, the Organization of African Unity and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries for the political, moral and material support they rendered during the darkest and most difficult days of our struggle for independence. Similarly we express our appreciation to Governments and peoples the world over who generously supported our just cause and whose collective efforts made Namibia's independence a reality.

On behalf of the Government and people of Namibia, I thank those nations for their political, material and technical contributions to the successful implementation of Security Council resolution 435 (1978).

The good will demonstrated towards our country and its people was reflected again in the generosity of many Member States which pledged assistance for Namibia's development at the donors' pledging Conference held earlier this year here in New York. On behalf of my Government and people I wish once again to thank all those countries for their practical demonstration of support for our efforts to make a success of Namibia's independence.

The success story resulting from the global co-operative effort in Namibia has left us with a sense of profound hope for the world and its future and the crucial peace-keeping and conflict-resolution roles of the United Nations. Through the Namibian experience, the United Nations has demonstrated that when there is the necessary political will, unity of purpose and international determination and solidarity, solutions can be found to the most vexed problems facing mankind. We should not lose sight of this lesson when we seek solutions to the remaining challenges of our time.

(President Nujoma)

As is to be expected of a concerned neighbour, I fervently and sincerely wish that such a spirit will also guide the international community in finding a durable solution to the problem of the inhuman system of apartheid in South Africa. Recent developments such as the release of some political prisoners, including Nelson Mandela, the unbanning of political organizations, the suspension of the armed liberation struggle by the African National Congress and the initiation of talks between the South African Government and the African National Congress represent moves in the right direction towards the peaceful resolution of that conflict.

However, we cannot ignore the fact that the principal pillars of apartheid are still intact. Neither can we ignore the fact that the majority of the oppressed people of South Africa are still deprived of exercising their democratic right to vote. Furthermore, the much-publicized talks about talks have yet to reach the stage of serious, purposeful and substantive negotiations aimed at finding a democratic and non-racial constitutional transformation in South Africa. Moreover, we are deeply saddened by the recent spate of violence and the resulting loss of life and destruction of property. These unfortunate developments, if not controlled, are likely to derail the promising efforts currently under way towards finding a peaceful solution.

In this connection my Government joins the entire international community in calling upon all the participants in the process to practise restraint and extreme caution. We should like to reaffirm that it is, in the first instance, the responsibility of President De Klerk's Government to arrest the violence and to put an end to it.

(President Nujoma)

Given the prevailing situation in South Africa, it is the strong view of my Government that the decisions and recommendations adopted by the General Assembly at its recently concluded forty-fourth session must be adhered to and implemented fully - including those that relate to retention of the existing sanctions against South Africa.

Still closer to home, we are deeply concerned about the continued bleeding and suffering in the People's Republic of Angola. My Government strongly supports the peace initiatives, launched by the Angolan Government, aimed at finding a negotiated settlement with UNITA. We deeply regret the continued supply of massive and unwarranted military and financial aid to UNITA from external sources. This, in our view, constitutes interference in the internal affairs of the People's Republic of Angola, as well as being detrimental to the objectives of a negotiated settlement. Now that the two parties to the conflict have agreed to seek a political solution, all external parties should desist from undertaking actions likely to jeopardize that process and should support a cease-fire as the first step towards ending the conflict.

My Government would also like to seize this opportunity to commend the Government of the People's Republic of Mozambique for its wisdom, courage and farsightedness in commencing negotiations with RENAMO in order that lasting peace and reconciliation might be brought about in that war-torn sister country.

With regard to the continuing civil strife in Liberia, the Republic of Namibia, like the rest of the African continent, supports the peace-keeping effort of the members of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). My Government appeals to the international community to provide adequate humanitarian, material and technical assistance to both the ECOWAS forces and the victims of this unfortunate civil conflict.

(President Nujoma)

My Government wishes the Secretary-General of the United Nations well in his efforts to find a lasting solution to the conflict in Western Sahara, so that the principle of self-determination may be realized fully by the Sahraoui people.

The Gulf crisis has been the subject of international outrage and condemnation. The Government of the Republic of Namibia has also condemned the naked and unprovoked aggression and illegal occupation of Kuwait by Iraq. This action is a clear violation of the principles of respect for the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of other States and thus constitutes a violation of the Charter of the United Nations and of international law.

That is why my Government has given unequivocal support to all resolutions adopted by the Security Council in respect of this unmitigated act of aggression. We therefore call upon Iraq to withdraw all its forces from Kuwait without further delay. And that withdrawal must be followed by the restoration of the legitimate Government of Kuwait.

Not too long ago Namibia was occupied by a foreign aggressor. We called upon the international community to come to our aid. This was done. Therefore we understand only too well the profound nature of the situation in Kuwait. As we see it, the central objective in the Gulf situation should be to end aggression and occupation and to re-establish the rule of law. To that end we urge that all available peaceful avenues be utilized. We are, however, deeply concerned at the scale of the military build-up that we are witnessing in the Gulf today.

In this regard, my Government is concerned, in particular, that this crisis may permanently divert attention from other serious and urgent issues in the Middle East, especially the quest by the Palestinian people for their legitimate and long-overdue right to self-determination and statehood. We call upon the Israeli Government to put an end to the oppression of the Palestinian people, perpetrated

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in the occupied territories, and to start negotiations with the legitimate representatives of the Palestinian people - namely, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO).

Similarly, it is the wish of my Government that the current initiatives towards finding a peaceful solution to the conflict in Cambodia and the talks on the reunification of the two Koreas should succeed sooner rather than later.

By now all of us are aware of the grave consequences of our failure seriously to address the environmental deterioration resulting from destructive human activities on a global scale. The destruction of the ozone layer could have very serious consequences for all forms of life on Earth. This means that all countries - rich and poor, industrialized and developing - must unite in a concerted world-wide effort to save our global habitat. The Government of the Republic of Namibia wants to make its contribution to this global effort.

To that end my Government is exploring the possibility of holding an international conference on the issue during 1992 in Namibia. We wish to encourage research on this subject, to explore the application of ecologically sound techniques in manufacturing and processing, to tailor our development to what is compatible with the preservation of our national and global environment.

The day after tomorrow the world will witness the most important gathering of Heads of State and Heads of Government in this century at the World Summit for Children. The Republic of Namibia, being perhaps one of the very few countries that have enshrined the rights of children in their Constitutions, thereby making such rights an integral part of the basic law, is looking forward to the Summit with great expectations.

(President Nujoma)

As I stated in my message to the Summit, it would not be enough for Governments to put their signatures to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. For the children of the world - a world whose attention is focused on the unprecedented gathering of world leaders next Sunday - the World Summit for Children and the United Nations Convention on their rights would have true meaning only if all the Heads of State and of Government gathered in New York could agree to ensure that: no child should die from a preventable disease, and Governments should strive for a 100 per cent immunization rate; that no child should be cursed with illiteracy and, ultimately, with unemployment, and that therefore primary education should be compulsory; that no child should go to sleep hungry and cold, and everything possible must be done to provide sufficient food and adequate shelter for all children; and that, as Governments, we have a responsibility and duty not to pass on planet Earth to future generations in a worse state than the one we received it in.

For the sake of our children we all must, accordingly, work together towards creating an atmosphere of peace, mutual trust and understanding, with a clear vision of reaching our ultimate goal, namely, that of social justice for all our peoples - and especially for our children, for they are our future.

The PRESIDENT: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Namibia for the statement he has just made.

The President of the Republic of Namibia was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

AGENDA ITEM 9 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE

Mr. ABDULLAH (Oman) (interpretation from Arabic): It gives me pleasure to congratulate you on your election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its forty-fifth session. Your election to this high office is in recognition of your ability and your experience. We have every confidence that, under your direction, the General Assembly will consolidate the gains it made at its last session under the leadership of your predecessor, Mr. Joseph Garba of Nigeria. I should like also to convey the support of the Sultanate of Oman and the States members of the Gulf Co-operation Council, of which, this year, Oman is president, for the efforts of the Secretary-General in carrying out the tasks entrusted to him by this Organization. We commend his endeavour to strengthen confidence in the effectiveness of the United Nations as a body capable of assuming a positive and effective role in the maintenance of international peace and security and in efending the inviolability of the enlightened principles and standards of this community of nations.

On behalf of my country's delegation, I should also like to take this opportunity to welcome the admission of the Principality of Liechtenstein to membership of the United Nations.

Even when the credibility of the United Nations was most widely doubted, my country declared its faith in the effective role that the Organization could play, given a readiness to be bound by its purposes and principles. We would like to reiterate that the foreign policy of the Sultanate of Oman, as laid down by His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said, is constantly guided by the high purposes and principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter and remains committed to the international and regional treaties to which the country has acceded.

(Mr. Abdullah, Oman)

Among the most important components of our policy as prescribed by His Majesty Sultan Qaboos since our modern resurgence began on 23 July 1970, the 20th anniversary of which we are celebrate this year, have been the strengthening of bonds of friendship with all other States without distinction and the maintenance of relations with them that are built on a foundation of mutual respect for sovereignty and independence, non-interference in the internal affairs of others, and the settlement of disputes between States through dialogue and by peaceful means. Those are the principles by which we are guided in our relations with our neighbours and every other State with which the Sultanate of Oman maintains relations and links of co-operation.

In the course of this year, the international community has witnessed important developments that have led to the emergence of the first genuine détente of its kind since the end of the Second World War between the two camps of East and West. That détente has had helpful consequences for many international and regional issues, and we are hopeful that its positive results will also of necessity reinforce the role of the United Nations, and enable it to adopt practical measures for the implementation of its resolution and the achievement of its goals, in particular those relating to the maintenance of international peace and security and the promotion of sound relations and co-operation among Member States.

On 2 August this year, Iraq's armies invaded and occupied by force the sister State, Kuwait. The invasion and forcible annexation of a neighbouring State is a dangerous precedent the likes of which the international community has not witnessed since the establishment of the United Nations. The Organization was founded and the purposes and principles enshrined in its Charter were adopted with the specific purpose in view of preventing such an occurrence. What Iraq has done

(Mr. Abdullah, Oman)

constitutes a flagrant violation of all the principles of the Organization and is the sort of conduct that is inadmissible under international legitimacy.

The Sultanate of Oman has strongly condemned the invasion and occupation, as have the Gulf Co-operation Council, the Council of Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the League of Arab States, the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers, the Extraordinary Arab Summit Conference and the United Nations Security Council. We commend the decisive international stand that has emerged from Security Council resolutions 660 (1990), 661 (1990), 662 (1990), 664 (1990), 665 (1990), 666 (1990), 667 (1990) and 670 (1990).

We also welcome the positive role played by the friendly and fraternal States in responding to the legitimate appeal made by Kuwait and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on the grounds of self-defence. There can be no doubt that that response is an expression of the readiness of the international community to preserve peace and to defend the legitimate interests of States, particularly small ones.

We are grieved by Iraq's failure to comply with the resolutions of the League of Arab States, the Organization of the Islamic Conference, and the United Nations Security Council calling for complete withdrawal from Kuwaiti territory and the restoration of the legitimate Government of Kuwait. We hope that Iraq will comply with all the aforementioned resolutions so that the Iraqi people can once again enjoy the benefits of peace and stability, channel their enormous human and natural resources to the task of building and reconstruction, and resume their constructive role in the Arab world and in the family of nations.

The current Gulf crisis has clearly shown that the Middle East region is one of an extremely sensitive character owing to the convergence of international interests there. The international community must therefore take decisive action

(Mr. Abdullah, Oman)

to solve the political problems of the region, chief among which is the question of Palestine.

We support all the international efforts which aim at a peaceful and just solution to the cause of the Palestinian people, and it is our view that resolving the problem will be in the interest of all parties concerned. The time has come for the Middle East region to enjoy a situation of stability and for all efforts in the region to be directed towards development.

Israel's open occupation of parts of Lebanese territory is a primary and insurmountable obstacle to the restoration of that country's unity, security and stability. We reiterate our solidarity with Lebanon in its efforts to achieve national reconcilation and regain its sovereignty and territorial integrity.*

In Afghanistan, the horrors of war and bloodshed and the plight of the refugees persist, after more than two years since the signing of the Geneva Accords. We are confident that the two super-Powers, as guarantors of the Accords, will provide all necessary support and assistance to international efforts to form a national Government embracing all the factions of the Afghan people. Afghanistan will thus be able to preserve its neutrality and its Islamic identity, and the plight of the refugees will be brought to an end, allowing them to live in dignity in a homeland linked as it must be by relations of good-neighbourliness to all contiguous States, including the Soviet Union.

After more than 20 years of division and relentless wars and disruptions, there are signs of a solution to the question of Cambodia on the horizon. The Sultanate of Oman welcomes the progress made in that connection, and in particular the agreement reached by the five permanent members of the Security Council in the last week of August this year, which has been accepted by the coalition Government

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* Mr. Afonso (Mozambique), Vice-President, took the Chair.

(Mr. Abdullah, Oman)

and all other parties. It hopes that concerted efforts will be made in the light of that agreement with a view to reaching a just and comprehensive settlement of the issue that will take account of the aspirations of the Cambodian people and its desire to choose for itself the system of Government that it deems appropriate.

We had hoped that the optimism which has come to permeate international relations would play an important and decisive role with regard to preparations for the convening of the Conference on the Indian Ocean this year. While commending the position adopted by certain States of the Western Group that participated in the work of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean, my country calls upon other Western States to follow their example and to respond to the spirit of conciliation and flexibility shown by the States of the Indian Ocean area so that the Conference may be held as rescheduled with the participation of all States concerned.

(Mr. Abdullah, Oman)

United Nations efforts which have led to the independence of Namibia were a splendid example of what this Organization can achieve if concerted international efforts are made to solve regional problems. We welcome the admission of Namibia to the Organization, and hope it will play the positive role expected of it in the search for peace and security throughout the region to which it belongs.

The Declaration adopted by the General Assembly at its sixteenth special session, on apartheid and its destructive consequences in southern Africa, makes it clear that lasting peace and stability in the region can be achieved only with the dawning of a new era in which no one suffers under the yoke of apartheid. The Declaration, which was adopted by consensus, illustrates the fact that peace does not simply mean the absence of war, but that it also involves rejecting the denial of rights of any kind. Thus, while welcoming the reforms instituted by the Government of President De Klerk, my country wishes to make it clear that those reforms should not be seen as an end in themselves but only as a step towards the complete elimination of the racist régime.

We hope also that efforts being made for the solution of the Angolan problem will be crowned with success so that peace and security can be achieved in that important part of the African continent.

The situation in Cyprus continues to be characterized by a lack of movement, despite the sustained efforts of the Secretary-General. The Sultanate of Oman calls upon the two parties to exercise self-restraint and to pursue their dialogue in a spirit of conciliation, so that Cyprus may surmount its ordeal and so that the members of its two communities may once again live together, as before, in security, peace and concord.

In Central America, the international community has begun to reap the harvest sown by the efforts made to achieve peace there. At the time, the Sultanate of Oman supported the Esquipulas and Tela agreements, and it can only support and view

(Mr. Abdullah, Oman)

with satisfaction the efforts towards national reconciliation now under way, which herald the beginning of a new peace process to which the peoples of the region have so long aspired.

The situation on the Korean peninsula continues to be a source of tension in East Asia. We hope the progress achieved thus far in the ongoing negotiations between the two States and in the contacts between the Governments of the Soviet Union and the Republic of Korea will establish a basis for understanding between the two countries. We shall support any international effort for the admission of the two Koreas as Members of the United Nations.

Environmental issues such as climate change, hazardous-waste disposal, the depletion of the ozone layer and environmentally sound development have become the object of increasing world interest, as is clear from the results of the London conference on Saving the Ozone Layer, the Hague Declaration and the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal.

Under the guidance of His Majesty Sultan Qaboos Bin Said, my country was among the first to enact legislation and establish mechanisms for environmental protection and the conservation of nature both at the domestic and the regional levels. Oman is thus engaged at present in identifying chemical substances used in its various industries which might affect the ozone layer, with a view to bringing the use of such substances into line with the levels established by the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer. Along with fellow members of the Gulf Co-operation Council, my country is also studying the Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer and its Additional Protocol with a view to acceding to them.

Environmental pollution does not recognize political frontiers. While we concede the world-wide character of the ecological problem, it must nevertheless be

(Mr. Abdullah, Oman)

acknowledged that all States are not equally responsible for it. The industrially advanced countries, as the major source of pollution, must bear a special responsibility for dealing with this serious threat. In that connection, my country is of the view that the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, to be held in Brazil in 1992, will afford the best opportunity for the international community to act in concert to discuss worsening environmental problems and to devise appropriate solutions taking account of current development needs without jeoopardizing the destiny of future generations.

The international community's aspiration to a world safe from the nuclear threat will remain unfulfilled if States that possess nuclear weapons persist in retaining them. The positive developments in the field of disarmament produced by the recent Washington summit of the two super-Powers must therefore be but one step towards ridding the world of those overkill and other weapons of mass destruction.

We appreciate the role played by the major Powers, particularly the United States of America and the Soviet Union, the responsibility they have taken upon themselves and the efforts they have made towards disarmament, but the United Nations must also play a significant role in this regard. The Organization must address an issue that could pose a threat to the continued existence of mankind on this planet.*

The impact of the recent positive political developments in the international arena has yet to be reflected in international economic co-operation. The gap between the industrially advanced countries and the developing countries continues to widen. The causes of imbalances in the world economy and in trade have not been remedied. Average annual rates of real growth in the developing countries fell

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* The President returned to the Chair.

(Mr. Abdullah, Oman)

from 5.5 per cent in the 1970s to less than 3 per cent in the 1980s. Terms of trade for most of those countries have deteriorated as a result of a fall in the prices of the basic commodities that are the mainstays of their exports. At the same time, many developing countries are suffering from problems of indebtedness, the burden of which continues to weigh heavily on their economies. In 1988 alone they lost some $50 billion in debt servicing and interest payments.

(Mr. Abdullah, Oman)

The regrettable events in the Gulf have demonstrated that whenever complex political issues arise in the international arena the economic difficulties of the developing countries tend to be aggravated. There is a pressing need for the international community, and particularly the industrially advanced countries, to adopt positive initiatives - such as the Brady initiative - and to enact other measures in keeping with the scale of the problem until such time as the developing countries can reverse the net flow of financial resources and thereby establish the basis required for their development and the realization of real growth.

The deliberations of the special session of the General Assembly devoted to international economic co-operation and, in particular, to the revitalization of the economic growth and development of the developing countries, which was held here last April, as well as the deliberations of the Second United Nations Conference on Least Developed Countries held at Paris in recent days have made it clear that the prevailing political climate might be most propitious for making a start on the elaboration of an international development strategy for the fourth United Nations Development Decade, one that would take into account, inter alia, the adoption of a new trade mechanism to help enhance the opportunities of access of exports from developing countries to the markets of industrially advanced countries.

The United Nations and its institutions have made important achievements and, as a consequence, the confidence of the international community in the role of the Organization and its satisfaction with the performance of that role has increased. The United Nations will remain the indispensable refuge of all States, a refuge to which, guided by the purposes and principles of the Organization and protected by its Charter in the maintenance of peace and security, they may have recourse to review their problems and differences and co-ordinate their efforts for a better future.

ADDRESS BY MR. JAN SYSE, PRIME MINISTER OF THE KINGDOM OF NORWAY

The PRESIDENT: The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Norway.

Mr. Jan Syse, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Norway, was escorted to the rostrum.

The PRESIDENT: I have great pleasure in welcoming the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Norway, His Excellency Mr. Jan Syse. I invite him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. SYSE (Norway): It is indeed a pleasure to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your election to your high office at such an important period in the history of the Organization.

As we proceed into the last decade of the millenium the recognition of one fundamental fact will penetrate and influence all spheres of human life: distance, measured in kilometres or miles, has lost its importance. The world is one. The challenges of our time require concerted policies and common action.

The instruments with which to formulate such policies and to implement such action are emerging. But the expanding rift between rich and poor contradicts the growing interdependence of our global community. Modern technology is bringing us closer year by year, but in living conditions we are drifting apart. The concluding years of this century must be marked by decisive action to create the instruments we need and to reverse negative trends.

There is one fundamental pre-condition for progress: we must proceed on the basis of respect for human rights and international law. Therefore, we must condemn Iraq's brutal attack on and occupation of Kuwait. Iraq's aggression is unacceptable. And it is more: it is a threat to our civilization and to the stability of all of us.

(Mr. Syse, Norway)

The Iraqi leadership bears the sole and complete responsibility for the dramatic situation that has been created. We must insist that law, and not brute power, prevail in international relations. There is no alternative. Iraq must withdraw from Kuwait. The legitimate Government of Kuwait must be restored. All hostages and foreigners must be allowed to leave Kuwait and Iraq. We support the resolute words of Presidents Bush and Gorbachev:

"Nothing short of the complete implementation of the United Nations Security Council resolutions is acceptable."

Norway is participating fully in the international effort to implement the United Nations sanctions effectively. We shall continue to do so until justice has been restored. That will require firmness and patience from all of us. It will require a sharing of responsibilities to ensure the efficient implementation of the embargo, to alleviate the enormous human suffering and to reduce the economic difficulties that - for many countries - have been added to already pressing problems.

At its forty-fifth session, the General Assembly must and will assume its responsibility for the achievement of a peaceful solution in accordance with the resolutions of the Security Council. The Norwegian Government gives its support to the efforts of the Security Council, as we supported its decision on Tuesday to ensure an effective air embargo. At this crucial hour the world must stand united. United we stand; divided we fall. So we must use every opportunity to press for a peaceful solution on the basis of the Security Council resolutions. We cannot negotiate about fundamental principles of international law on which a peaceful world order must be built. On the day we agree to negotiate about such principles we shall all have lost.

(Mr. Syse, Norway)

If we fail, we shall all be responsible for the consequences. We shall all have to face them, not only in this particular conflict but in terms of a more fragile world. With the cold war behind us we have an unprecedented chance to build a new and more co-operative world order. By whatever we now choose to do we shall send important signals that will shape our future. If we stand firm, other aggressors will hesitate. If we yield, the threshold for new acts of aggression will be lowered.

The decisiveness of the Security Council represents a turning point in the history of the United Nations, demonstrating the will of the world community to revive the principles of collective security. The United Nations has been brought closer to what was originally envisaged in the Charter. That is an encouraging development, but the progress we have made is fragile. If we stay the course in this present conflict, then we shall have taken a giant and decisive leap forward.

We must also look beyond the present crises. The United Nations needs a stronger capacity to intervene. We need a thorough discussion on how to refine and develop the ability of the United Nations to secure international peace and stability. A number of issues will be addressed. We must further enhance the role of the Security Council; we must create more efficient United Nations mechanisms, and not only for solving but for preventing conflicts; we must make maximum use of the good offices of the Secretary-General.

Allow me in this connection to express the admiration of my Government for the tireless efforts the Secretary-General has undertaken in a number of conflict areas. Those efforts have contributed greatly to the strengthening of the role and prestige of the United Nations.

(Mr. Syse, Norway)

Norway is among the traditional contributors of troops to peace-keeping operations. The potential of these operations, combined with diplomatic peace-making efforts and preventive diplomacy, must be further developed. We must also look more closely at the possibility of deploying the blue helmets in support of humanitarian relief operations in war-torn areas. A group of experts of the Nordic countries will now meet to examine ways to strengthen the peace-making role of the United Nations. Furthermore, the Soviet proposal for a standing international military force under United Nations control to deter future acts of aggression is also a valuable contribution to this debate.

Maintaining a broadly based consensus within the Security Council is, of course, a fundamental prerequisite for success. In its deliberations on the Iraq-Kuwait conflict, the Security Council has succeeded eminently in forging the necessary consensus and solidarity. The new era of co-operation between the United States and the Soviet Union has given the Organization new strength. To build this new climate of trust has required boldness and political courage by the leaders of both countries. Their efforts have our strong support.

The possibilities of the United Nations to play a truly constructive role in world affairs have increased. But the necessary financial foundation is still lacking. In his annual report, the Secretary-General points to the glaring gap between the expectations now placed in the United Nations and the resources put at its disposal. I urge those countries which are in arrears to the United Nations and to the special accounts for peace-keeping operations to pay their debt in full as soon as possible.

The process which led to independence for Namibia is among the most outstanding successes of the United Nations. I am indeed pleased to see Namibia finally taking its rightful place in this Hall.

(Mr. Syse, Norway)

In the rest of southern Africa we have also witnessed historic developments during the past year. We welcome the political process that has been set in motion by the South African Government and by the African National Congress (ANC). The agreement of 6 August is a milestone on the road towards a new democratic and non-racial South Africa.

President De Klerk and Nelson Mandela are displaying remarkable courage and foresight. The road on which they have embarked is difficult. But they must persevere. They must succeed in their search for a peaceful transition from apartheid to democracy. As soon as such profound and irreversible changes have taken place, we will respond positively and quickly and remove the international pressure, including existing sanctions.

Recent developments in Cambodia also give reason for hope. We welcome the establishment of a Supreme National Council and the agreement on a transitional arrangement until free and fair elections can be held. The agreements reached envisage an unprecedented role for the United Nations in this transitional period. This is imperative. The Cambodian people needs concrete guarantees that the inhuman policies of the Khmer Rouge will not again engulf Cambodia in suffering and tragedy.

The Iraqi aggression against Kuwait has completely overshadowed and harmed the efforts to achieve a solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Palestinian question. It is now essential to bring about an Israeli-Palestinian dialogue and to arrive at a just, comprehensive and lasting solution to this conflict.

The winds of revolutionary change have swept over Eastern Europe. At last, these countries and their citizens are free to decide on their own future. The continent is moving from the post-war era of containment to an era of co-operation. What has been achieved in an amazingly short time by the emerging

(Mr. Syse, Norway)

democracies of Central and Eastern Europe deserves our admiration and respect. So does the foresight of the Soviet leaders who decided to stand aside and enable the peoples of the region to realize their yearning for freedom and democracy.

The process of German unification has been carried out with tremendous political courage and in full respect for the legitimate interests of others. We congratulate the two Governments and the German people on this historic achievement. Chancellor Kohl - and Foreign Minister Genscher in his statement yesterday - have emphasized their determination to build a European Germany and not a German Europe. We wish them success in this endeavour.

Hence, Europe is becoming whole and free. Through the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) and on the basis of institutions such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the European Community, the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) and the Council of Europe, the nations of the continent are creating new structures of co-operation. The CSCE is uniquely suited to play a leading role in that endeavour. It must be transformed from a political process to an institutional framework.

The new era in East-West relations has created historic opportunities for disarmament and arms control. Prospects of an early treaty arising from the strategic arms reduction talks (START) providing for deep reductions in United States and Soviet strategic nuclear arms are promising. In Vienna, an agreement on conventional forces in Europe is within reach.

The historic changes in Europe tell us to be ambitious also in attacking the global issues, such as the elimination of chemical weapons and the prevention of nuclear proliferation.

The Gulf conflict demonstrates the urgency of putting the achievement of a global chemical weapons ban at the very top of our agenda. The chemical weapons threat must be eradicated once and for all. Intensified efforts are required.

(Mr. Syse, Norway)

In the field of nuclear non-proliferation, progress has already been achieved in the domain of nuclear-arms control. Article VI of the Non-Proliferation Treaty is being implemented. This should now pave the way for renewed efforts to prevent the emergence of additional nuclear-weapon States. A comprehensive test-ban treaty will, in our opinion, be an essential element in this respect.

In Europe, we have overcome the division of the continent. Political, economic and human resources, which for decades were absorbed in an unproductive East-West stalemate, can now be released for new and creative efforts. There will still be numerous problems to solve. But Europe cannot and will not become more occupied with its own affairs and less with its global responsibilities. On the contrary, the new Europe which is now emerging will have an even greater responsibility for meeting the global challenges than a divided continent could ever assume.

The creation of democratic and pluralistic societies has always been an important objective in the development policy of my country. The world-wide discussion which has emerged on issues of democracy, freedom of opinion, participation in decision-making, political pluralism and free elections is remarkabale. It reflects the growing recognition of one basic fact: that in the long run, no government will retain its legitimacy unless it is a government by the people and for the people.

In several developing countries one-party systems are being questioned. I urge those countries to take the step from reflection to action by implementing rapid political and legal reforms. Initiatives in this direction will be given moral, political and economic support.

Democracy, human rights and sustainable development are inseparable. This has become increasingly evident. Economic efficiency and equitable distribution cannot be achieved if the rights and the potential of the individual are neglected.

(Mr. Syse, Norway)

Norway will attach increasing importance to the dialogue with our development partners on issues of democratic development, respect for human rights and popular participation in the development process. Decisive steps towards democracy and respect for human rights are the best guarantee for continued and broad popular support in the industrialized countries for development co-operation. Lack of progress could, on the other hand, negatively affect the willingness of donors to provide resources and support.

We all gain from a more comprehensive dialogue on these crucial issues. Let us always keep in mind that the building of democracy is a never-ending process. The final stone is never put in place.

The changes in East-West relations have also been accompanied by a narrowing of ideological differences in the economic field. Market-oriented policies have conquered the world. But the market is no end in itself. It is merely a means - the best means found so far - to achieve the most efficient allocation of productive resources. Helmut Schmidt once said: "Markets are like parachutes - they only function when open." But markets must also be monitored to ensure that they function effectively. They must be adjusted to achieve social justice. The German expression Soziale Marktwirtschaft - a social market economy - embraces all these dimensions.

No international economic environment, however positive, will alone be sufficient to obtain satisfactory results. Sound and efficient policies and determined efforts by the Government and by the people of each country to carry out reforms is a prerequisite for growth. This is about to be recognized. It was clearly visible at the eighteenth special session of the General Assembly, in April. The work on the new international development strategy for the fourth United Nations development decade offers an opportunity to go farther in this

(Mr. Syse, Norway)

direction. The new strategy must emphasize the importance of the human factor in development. No longer-term economic development is possible without a healthy, well-educated population; without a population that enjoys full civil and political rights, and without an environment which can mobilize each individual's potential and creativity.

Earlier this month agreement was reached on a comprehensive Programme of Action for the least developed countries. It builds on the fundamental principles of shared responsibility and on a strengthened partnership for the development of these countries. The international community cannot allow a further marginalization of the least developed countries. It is of fundamental importance to the success of this programme that its many concrete measures be fully implemented. We would have wished to see more far-reaching commitments on the part of the international community - not least with regard to targets for concessional aid flows. Nevertheless, the new programme will give fresh impetus to the social and economic development in the least developed countries.

But the debt problem remains acute. New and vigorous efforts to improve the debt strategy are required. This means increased resource transfers, more comprehensive debt reductions and more ambitious reform policies. In particular, the plight of severely indebted low-income countries calls for urgent action. The Norwegian Government has submitted proposals to Parliament which will provide some low-income countries debt reductions considerably beyond the Toronto terms of the Paris Club.

An urgent task in the environmental field is the achievement of more efficient decision-making procedures. To achieve an acceptable level of ecological security we shall need strengthened supranational institutions with decision-making powers

(Mr. Syse, Norway)

combined with effective means for supervision, monitoring and control. The United Nations must be the cornerstone of such a system.

In the European and North American context, Norway is advocating that the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) must be used to mobilize Governments in concerted action to combat environmental degradation. It will have to do so in close co-operation with the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

In the Bergen Declaration of May this year, Ministers set a new green agenda for the 1990s for the ECE region. The decision to base national and international policies on the precautionary principle is an important achievement. So is the agreement that the industrialized countries should take the lead in solving global environmental problems. Developing countries must be assisted by the financial resources and technology transfer enabling them to join the struggle. New ways of providing such additional resources must be identified.

Solidarity with developing countries through financial assistance must be a major issue - and result - of the process leading up to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development to be held in Brazil in 1992. Our common strategies must aim at integrating environmental concerns into the economic and social development process in all countries.

I urge the General Assembly to decide at this session - as a matter of the highest priority - on launching the negotiations on a framework convention of climate change. Such a convention must be ready for adoption at the 1992 Conference. Climate change is a truly global problem. It concerns all of us.

The world is experiencing a welcome revival of multilateralism. As the idea of collective management of our present challenges takes hold, we are faced with the need to strengthen the capabilities of international organizations. That will

(Mr. Syse, Norway)

be the crucial test. Narrowly defined national interests will certainly emerge as stumbling blocks. We must learn to adopt a long-term view for the common good; learn to accept majority decisions of operational significance for the management of the global challenges; learn to express our national interests in terms of firm commitments to the advancement of a common purpose.

The United Nations will have to carry a major part of that burden - to build awareness, to increase our knowledge, to formulate our common policies and to implement our common action. The Norwegian Government will participate fully, provide its contribution and give its firmest support.

The PRESIDENT: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Norway for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Jan Syse, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Norway, was escorted from the rostrum.

Mr. SAMARAS (Greece): At the outset I wish to extend my sincere congratulations to you, Sir, on your unanimous election to the presidency of the current session of the General Assembly. We are indeed deeply satisfied because the representative of a country with which Greece maintains close relations of friendship is presiding over the General Assembly, and also because you are well known for your great diplomatic skills and experience, qualities that will undoubtedly be conducive to the success of this forty-fifth session.

My sincere thanks go, too, to the outgoing President, Major-General Garba, for the excellent way he carried out his task in guiding the proceedings of the forty-fourth session of the General Assembly.

I would be remiss if I did not express my deep appreciation to the Secretary-General for his untiring efforts in setting the pace of the main United Nations task: maintaining world peace and security.

(Mr. Samaras, Greece)

Earlier this week, the Foreign Minister of Italy, in his capacity as President of the Council of the European Communities, delivered a statement on behalf of its twelve member States. My Government fully subscribes to the views expressed by Mr. De Michelis. However, I would like to stress certain specific points of particular interest to Greece.

For Europe, the period under review has been one of the most significant since the end of the Second World War. During the year that elapsed, the foundations for a better future in Europe were laid, while the unification of Germany, an event of great historic importance, is to be realized in the coming days. Europe is being ushered well into the twenty-first century. Human rights, the rule of law and democracy have been established in most of Eastern Europe. Human dignity and freedom of expression have been placed at the epicentre of politics as never before in the history of our continent. In normal circumstances, such political changes - which virtually amount to what could perhaps be called a revolution of the individual - would have taken several decades to come about.

It is a time for rejoicing, but also for reckoning because, first, these changes must be consolidated; secondly, these changes towards respect for human rights and democracy should embrace the whole continent.

With regard to the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE), in particular, many ideas have emerged. Several of them are even pace-setting, but all need very careful consideration as to their applicability within the European framework. The more States respect human rights on their very own initiative, the less new bureaucratic mechanisms are needed. In the CSCE, one important achievement in human rights, which reflects Europe's "new thinking", is the Copenhagen Document of the Conference on the Human Dimension of the CSCE, which indeed sets forth new standards of excellence in the field of human rights.

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As regards the second basket of the Helsinki Final Act, mention should be made of the Bonn Conference on Economic Co-operation in Europe. Delegations agreed on the need to establish market-oriented economies throughout Europe, and recognized the link between private enterprise and pluralistic democracy. Greece considers this Conference as an important step towards creating a climate of mutual trust, peace and security in our continent.

Furthermore, we are strongly in favour of convening a conference on security and co-operation in the Mediterranean, following the example of the CSCE.

Greece, a European country within the Mediterranean, has a strong interest in the convening of such a conference. It attaches particular importance to the strengthening of ties between the countries of the region, the easing of tensions and the eventual settlement of problems in that sensitive area. This can be achieved only by the participation in the conference and its preparatory meetings of all Mediterranean countries, as well as those States that have a prevailing interest in the region. Such a global approach is of paramount importance for a successful conference on security and co-operation in the Mediterranean. A case-by-case approach would only obfuscate the problems of the Mediterranean region.

A similar process, in regional terms, was initiated among the countries of the Balkan peninsula. In this connection, may I recall that, since the mid-1970s, Greece has undertaken a series of important initiatives aimed at the consolidation of peace and co-operation in the Balkans, on the basis of the principles of the Helsinki Final Act.

Following the meeting of the six Balkan foreign ministers in Belgrade two years ago, several specialized meetings were organized, which resulted in enlarging the areas of common interest. During 1990, two successful high-level meetings took place in Athens and in Bucharest, while the second meeting of ministers for foreign

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affairs is scheduled to take place in Tirana next month. We hope that this meeting will constitute an important step in strengthening multilateral and bilateral co-operation in the Balkan peninsula.

With regard to neighbouring Turkey, Greece is determined to conduct a serious and sincere dialogue, founded on respect for the Treaty of Lausanne and international law. This dialogue should aim at overcoming the differences affecting our bilateral relations and at establishing lasting links of friendly co-operation. However, one should bear in mind that the question of Cyprus affects the relations between Greece and Turkey in the most direct way. Therefore, it would not be realistic to expect the dialogue to proceed in a successful way as long as a solution to the problem of Cyprus is not found, based on the principles of the relevant United Nations resolutions and of the high-level agreements of 1977 and 1979.

I believe none of us in this Hall doubts that respect for the United Nations resolutions is the absolute prerequisite in the quest for a just and viable solution to regional problems. One of these is the problem of Cyprus which, however, stands out as a most blatant example of disregard of the relevant United Nations resolutions. As a result, the dividing-lines imposed by force in the island republic 16 years ago still exist at a time when the walls that separate people have crumbled throughout the European continent. Just three days ago, in toasting the heads of State and government attending this Assembly, the Secretary-General of the United Nations stressed that the Security Council had, regarding Kuwait,

> "given emphatic expression to the principle that invasion of one State by another is not to be permitted or countenanced, and that the acquisition of territory by force is inadmissible".

What is valid for Kuwait is equally valid for Cyprus.

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There is no need to repeat the well-known facts about the consequences of the invasion of Cyprus. The 200,000 refugees, the missing persons, the plight of the Greek Cypriots who are hemmed in, the continuing colonization of the occupied territories and the looting and destruction of the cultural heritage in the occupied part of the island are facts known to all.

Since the last session of the General Assembly, the Secretary-General continued to strive for a solution of the Cyprus problem within the framework of his mission of good offices, but to no avail, owing to the intransigence of Mr. Denktash. Thus, the latest attempt to breathe new life into the intercommunal talks ended in total collapse.

The case was set out clearly in the Secretary-General's report of 8 March 1990. In this document (S/21183), it is stated that Mr. Denktash's insistence that the term "communities" be used in a manner that is synonymous with the term "peoples", each having a separate right to "self-determination", created an impasse of a substantive kind, which raised questions regarding the essence of the Secretary-General's mandate of good offices. The Security Council, to which the Secretary-General turned for guidance, rejected this attempt to change the basis of the talks. The impasse, however, has persisted, owing again to Mr. Denktash's unwillingness to renounce his intransigent views. In fact, it has even deepened further, as a result of various provocative actions taken by the Turkish authorities.

Thus, last July, the Turkish forces of occupation handed over the control of Varosha, the new town of Famagusta, to the so-called Turkish-Cypriot security forces, a development which could lead to an eventual settlement of the area by people other than its inhabitants. In view of this, the President of the Security Council again felt compelled, in his statement of 19 July, to voice the concern of the members of the Council over any action which contravenes paragraph 5 of

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resolution 550 (1984). This paragraph states clearly that the Security Council "considers attempts to settle any part of Varosha by people other than its inhabitants as inadmissible and calls for the transfer of this area to the administration of the United Nations".

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In spite of the general outcry provoked by this action, Turkey went on to sign a pseudo-agreement with a pseudo-State providing for an abolition of passport requirements and for a customs union between Turkey and those parts of the Republic of Cyprus still occupied by Turkish military forces. Apart from the obvious disregard of the will of the international community demonstrated by this move, this so-called agreement clearly contravenes the provisions of the Association Agreement between the European Community and Cyprus as well as the ones between the European Community and Turkey.

Greece, on its part, will continue to give its full support, in close co-operation with the Government of the Republic of Cyprus, to the Secretary-General's mission of good offices. In the belief that the continuing military occupation of a part of the territory of a sovereign State Member of this Organization constitutes a permanent threat to peace and security in that sensitive area of the eastern Mediterranean, my country calls for the implementation, without any further delay, of all United Nations resolutions relating to Cyprus, which clearly also provide for the withdrawal of all Turkish troops. Greece appeals to all States Members of the United Nations to show the same sensitivity towards Cyprus as the one demonstrated towards Kuwait. In fact, action taken recently by the United Nations in the Gulf crisis does not exhaust the ability of the Organization to resolve crises arising from invasion and military occupation of a third country. The Cyprus problem remains still open and calls for its urgent settlement. Otherwise we have to ask ourselves: for how long can we accept attempts to relegate to oblivion the shame of the invasion? For how long can we preach social goodness and practise political obfuscation? For how long can we substitute inertia for action?

During past years, efforts leading to nuclear, conventional and chemical disarmament have attained unprecedented progress.

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Following the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-range and Shorter-range Missiles, we are now looking forward to further progress on the conclusion of agreements on strategic nuclear armaments and chemical weapons between the United States and the Soviet Union. Greece attaches the utmost importance to both these goals.

Greece, as one of the first parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, has been firmly attached to the provisions of the Treaty and supported the strengthening of the non-proliferation régime. We reiterate the appeal to States which are not yet parties to it to adhere rapidly to that Treaty, since adherence to it by all States will constitute an additional guarantee for international peace and security.

The Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe context remains indeed the most efficient negotiating framework for conventional disarmament. We earnestly hope that the next summit meeting of that Conference in Paris will take note of the signing of the agreement on conventional armed forces in Europe and of the results achieved in the negotiations on confidence and security-building measures. Thus the way will be paved for new conventional arms control negotiations with a view to the strengthening of security and stability in Europe by eliminating the capacity for surprise attack and large-scale offensive action and establishing a stable and secure balance of conventional armed forces, including conventional armaments, at lower levels. If this goal is achieved, the risks of political and military confrontation on our continent will be significantly reduced.

Last year, from this very podium, we added our voice to those who expressed optimism for the rapprochement between East and West. Yet our hopes that all disputes between States could be settled by peaceful means as provided for in the United Nations Charter have not come true. New setbacks occurred, and the world

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situation is far from satisfactory. The recent tragic events in the Gulf region have dashed our high expectations and are jeopardizing our common efforts towards creating a new climate for international relations. Such acts, which contravene the letter and spirit of the United Nations Charter and international legality as well as international morality, cannot but be categorically condemned.

Greece, along with its European Community partners, expressed from the very outset its unreserved condemnation of the invasion and called for the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of the Iraqi forces from the territory of Kuwait. My country, firmly committed to the ideals and principles of the United Nations Charter, has rejected outright the annexation of Kuwait. My Government fully endorses all the measures taken for the restoration of legality in Kuwait and the implementation of the relevant resolutions of the Security Council. Let me once again underline that, if previous resolutions of the Security Council had been enforced, especially in cases of invasion, we might not have witnessed the present tragic situation in the Gulf area. Such an enforcement might have acted as a deterrent for any would-be aggressor.

It is in this spirit that my Government has spared no effort in providing its own contribution for the solution of the crisis, for the release of foreign citizens illegally held by the Iraqi authorities, among which also are many Greek citizens, and eventually for the re-establishment of peace and security in the area.

More particularly, Greece has decided to accept the request made by Kuwait and Saudi Arabia and thus participate in the multinational force, through the Frigate Lemnos. This decision was motivated by our country's attachment to freedom, to peace and to respect for the principles of the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of all nations. This is all the more pertinent in the case of small, weak nations, for which international solidarity and collective defence are of the utmost importance.

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Referring now to the Palestinian problem, the peace process remains in a stalemate. Our long-standing position is that a just, comprehensive and permanent solution to it can be achieved by the convening of an international peace conference with the participation of the five permanent members of the Security Council and the parties directly involved, including, of course, the Palestinian people, represented by the Palestine Liberation Organization. However, the peace process is currently blocked, owing to the persistence of Israel in creating new faits accomplis, namely, by creating settlements in territories occupied since 1967.

Linked by traditional ties of friendship and co-operation with the countries and peoples of the area, Greece attaches particular importance to the resolution of this problem. The recent upgrading of our diplomatic relations with Israel, while not entailing a change in our Middle East policy, offers us greater possibilities of participating in efforts to resolve this long-standing problem.

In Lebanon, the Taif agreement, the objective of which was to restore Lebanese institutions shaken by war, gave rise to hopes for a peaceful settlement. In this regard, the election of a new President, as well as the formation of a Government, have been the first encouraging steps for the implementation of this national reconciliation agreement. We earnestly hope that the process will continue.

My Government welcomes the strengthening of democracy in Latin America, with the countries of which we share many cultural and historical ties, and the significant steps along the path of reconciliation in the area. At the same time, we feel concern over the acute socio-economic problems the region faces. We believe that the process of regional integration could open new prospects for the Latin American countries in the course of this decade.

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The situation in southern Africa has always been followed with special attention by my country. Events have taken place over the past 12 months that give us strong feelings of hope that a new climate of peace and progress will soon prevail in that region.

First of all, the people of Namibia have achieved their well-deserved independence and their country has become a full member of the international community. This is a major development, which marks the beginning of a new era in southern Africa.

The recent developments in South Africa have also increased the prospects for the elimination of the abhorrent system of apartheid and its replacement by a new, united, non-racial and democratic South African society. We have welcomed the positive steps taken by President de Klerk since his election in September 1989, in particular the release of Mr. Nelson Mandela and other political prisoners, the removal of the ban on the African National Congress of South Africa (ANC) and other political organizations, the lifting of the state of emergency - except for Natal Province - and the partial repeal of the apartheid legislation. Furthermore, the outcome of the Pretoria meetings in August has amply demonstrated a statesmanlike determination by the two sides to remove the remaining obstacles to engaging in substantial negotiations for a new constitutional order in South Africa. The decision of the African National Congress to suspend the armed struggle deserves our special praise.

Let me now turn to the sphere of international economics. To cope with the world of transition, where, more than ever before, economic problems occupy a central place on the world political agenda, a greater degree of collaboration in international affairs and a wider vision are necessary.

The integration of the world economy has made imperative the shaping of new policies to respond to the increasing degree of interdependence of national

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economies. Such new policies should take into serious consideration the ongoing changes in Central and Eastern Europe so that the decisions to be made on economic issues could satisfy the demands and help solve the problems of the countries in the region.

The recent adoption by consensus of a universal declaration on international economic co-operation - with the active participation of Greece - has set in motion a process of change challenging the past models and ideas about development, which were oversimplified, and introducing more pragmatic approaches to economic and social issues.

Moreover, international economic co-operation is considered essential for the elimination of trade obstacles, for increased market efficiency, for the encouragement of respective national economic possibilities, and for the prevention of distortions in trade flow as well as in transfers of technology and financial resources. International economic co-operation should also take account of the inequalities witnessed in the economic development of the various countries, their respective national policies and the international economic environment.

The problems of many heavily indebted countries are a cause of grave concern and can become, in the long term, a threat to political stability. The debt problem is complex. An equitable and mutually agreed solution can be reached only by an approach based on development, within the framework of an integrated, growth-oriented strategy that takes account of the particular circumstances of each country.

In view of past experience with debt and development problems, a successful debt strategy should be directed towards achieving the following combined measures: voluntary debt reduction by commercial banks, serious adjustment efforts by debtor countries, and changes in the tax and regulatory régimes of industrial countries.

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Nevertheless, real progress can be achieved only if Governments are prepared to support economic stabilization by taking the appropriate measures to adjust their own economies to prevailing market conditions.

Another serious problem, of international concern, is that of poverty. To cope with this problem courageous measures are needed at both the national and the international levels. At the national level, a solution cannot be achieved merely by increasing social expenditure. What is needed is an increase in real gross national product. To that end an appropriate institutional framework should be created in order to attract foreign capital and promote private investment. At the international level, an increase in bilateral and multilateral aid to prevent famine and human suffering is a social must for our world.

In the past few years the problem of the environment has come to the fore; at present it constitutes a major international concern. Our community ought to develop an effective environmental policy which would not place obstacles in the path of the establishment of the appropriate industrial infrastructure while at the same time achieving the overall development goals of each country. Greece attaches the utmost importance to the 1992 United Nations Conference, which, we believe, will adopt an environmental strategy based on that particular concept of sustainable development while at the same time ensuring the transfer of a technology compatible with the environmental projection targets set by national economic policies.

The dramatic increase in drug abuse and in the illicit production of and trafficking in narcotics constitutes the most serious social issue confronting the international community. The problem facing us today is not confined to the framework of drugs or money laundering. Rather, it is linked with violence and, in particular, with terrorism and the illegal arms trade.

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Greece is actively engaged in the fight against drugs and is currently considering the adoption of new legislation and policies to tackle the problem successfully. The development of economic and trade relations between the European countries and the Middle East has resulted in an increased importance of the Balkan route for drug trafficking. In order to deal with the related problems even more effectively, Greece is co-operating, in the European Communities, the Balkans and Central Europe, with the countries concerned with a view to reaching agreement on practical measures.

National measures alone cannot contain this threat. Only concerted international action can deal effectively with the drug problem in all its aspects. In this respect we commend the work of the United Nations and, in particular, the United Nations Fund for Drug Abuse Control, which provides valuable assistance to countries that need it most. We welcome also the adoption at the seventeenth special session of the General Assembly, on drugs, of the Political Declaration and Global Programme of Action, which, we hope, will be implemented by all Member States, thus establishing the necessary framework for the struggle against drugs.

Following the East-West rapprochement and the favourable conditions in international relations that have emerged therefrom, we believe the moment has come to reinforce and consolidate some institutions of international law, especially those referring to the peaceful settlement of disputes and the jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice.

My Government has always attached great importance to the obligation of the peaceful settlement of disputes and has always contributed positively to all efforts aimed at strengthening that obligation. It did so particularly when the Manila Declaration on Peaceful Settlement of Disputes was being drawn up. Now we

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hope that the meeting of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) on this particular question, to be held in Valetta in early 1991 under promising conditions, will give new impetus to all efforts undertaken in this regard.

We also attach great importance to the enhancement of the role of the International Court of Justice so that it can develop into a central factor for the peaceful settlement of international disputes.

As far as the Decade of International Law is concerned, my Government is strongly in favour of the relevant process and firmly believes that no efforts should be spared to this end. The idea which must be at the heart of all our efforts is the primacy of international law. It is indeed unacceptable for the international community to put up with the flagrant violation of jus cogens principles enshrined in the Charter and to watch resolutions of the supreme organ of the United Nations being deliberately discarded and set aside.

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In concluding, I wish to underline once again the pre-eminent role which we feel the United Nations is called to play at the present juncture in international affairs. My Government considers that our Organization has a crucial mission to accomplish, one which relates, not only to the maintenance of world peace and security, but also to the eradication of poverty and the protection of human dignity.

In the view of my Government, the present crisis in international relations can be overcome only if we intensify our co-operation and direct our efforts towards implementing and reactivating all the provisions of the Charter, in particular those which have remained a dead letter so far. We believe that fruitful results will be reached thereby and that the authority and prestige of the United Nations will be thus enhanced, especially in the eyes of the younger generations of this world.

In the very next days, the World Summit for Children will be held in this building, in this very Hall. Let us avail ourselves of this opportunity to consider our responsibilities towards these young generations and pledge our best efforts to help create a better world for them, a world free of poverty, free of hatred, free of strife.

Mr. MAECHA (Comoros) (interpretation from French): Sir, it is with great pleasure that I convey to you, an islander like ourselves, the warm congratulations of the people and Government of the Islamic Federal Republic of the Comoros upon your election as President of the General Assembly at its forty-fifth session. We are confident that your outstanding diplomatic qualities will ensure the full success of our work. I should also like to convey our gratitude to Mr. Joseph Garba for the competent manner in which he carried out his tasks at our last session.*

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* Mr. Mavrommatis (Cyprus), Vice-President, took the Chair.

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I should like also to pay a very sincere tribute to the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, for his patient efforts, courage and perseverance in the service of peace, which is the principal objective of our Organization. His sense of responsibility, his accessibility and his tireless will to work for the progress of mankind and for greater solidarity in the international community are qualities that deserve our gratitude.

If the credibility of the actions of the various organs of the United Nations and the confidence of the international community have greatly increased during these last months, our task, none the less, remains immense. The reduction of tension between the super-Powers, the end of the confrontation of blocs and of the East-West antagonism had offered the hope that solutions would be found to the conflicts in the world. The collapse of the Berlin Wall, a symbol of the cold war, the rebirth of democracy in Eastern Europe and the beginning of multiparty systems in Africa had given us hope for a better future. Unfortunately, the onslaught of Iraq in the Gulf on 2 August has put a halt to the euphoria that existed in the international community. Today, there is indignation and we deeply grieve over Iraq's invasion of the State of Kuwait. The negation of the existence of a sovereign State, its occupation and the encroachment upon its territorial integrity are flagrant violations of international law. They are acts that run counter to the fundamental principles of the Charter of our Organization.

Concerned for the preservation of peace in that part of the world, which has so often been the scene of fratricidal wars, the Government of the Islamic Federal Republic of the Comoros, at the Islamic Conference in Cairo, which occurred two days after the onslaught by the armed forces of Iraq, was one of the first Governments to condemn the invasion of Kuwait.

Our country approves the courageous resolutions adopted unanimously by the Security Council. Only the unconditional withdrawal of Iraqi troops from Kuwait

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and the recovery by Kuwait of its sovereignty and territorial integrity will open the way to a peaceful solution. It is for that reason that here, on behalf of the Government and people of the Comoros, in the name of the principles of Islam and brotherhood, I solemnly appeal to our Iraqi brothers to withdraw their forces from Kuwait and bring about the settlement of the conflict by peaceful means.

The stormy winds that are blowing at this time have, in any case, brought about the strengthening of the role of the United Nations and the final settlement of eight years of war between Iran and Iraq. For the first time in its history, the Security Council has managed to carry out its responsibility with the unanimous agreement of its five permanent members. That is an extremely encouraging event, one which greatly enhances the credibility of the United Nations. For small countries such as ours, which do not have armies capable of preventing aggression against us, the decisive measures adopted by the Security Council are more than merely reassuring.

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The Council, on behalf of the international community as a whole, has reacted clearly and unambiguously to an unjustified act of aggression against a Member State. In this new context the delegation of the Federal Islamic Republic of the Comoros can only express the sincere hope that the cohesion and new spirit of co-operation shown by the five permanent members of the Security Council will continue. What would happen if all this was only temporary opportunism and not the expression of a well-thought-out and lasting will motivated solely by the desire for the maintenance of the peace and security of the entire international community? Let us hope that, on the contrary, our Organization and mankind as a whole are witnessing the emergence of a new era in which international law will definitively prevail over force.

Does not this unanimity about the invasion of Kuwait give us, by the same token, new hope with regard to another conflict with which the Assembly has been regularly dealing for decades, namely, the Palestinian problem, the problem of another people expelled by force from its country? We Comorians are profoundly concerned by the persistence of the crisis in the Near East. It too is the direct result of the brutality unjustly suffered by our Palestinian brothers. Our position on this question has never varied: we unreservedly support the struggle for the restoration of their inalienable right to self-determination, independence and freedom. The international community must no longer accept two sets of weights and measures: the suffering of the Palestinian people deserves our full attention, and the same just severity must be shown in regard to Israeli behaviour in the occupied territories. That is why we reaffirm our adherence to the convening in the near future of an international peace conference under the auspices of the United Nations, with the participation of all the parties concerned, including the

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Palestine Liberation Organization, the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

Fortunately, despite these upheavals, solutions have been found to certain painful conflicts - Namibia provides proof of that. In this context, on behalf of the Government and people of the Comoros I welcome the Namibian delegation, which like that of Liechtenstein, is participating in the General Assembly for the first time as the representative of a full-fledged Member State.

The liberation of Namibia marks the success of a people's struggle for its fundamental right to sovereignty. This victory is also a victory for the Organization and is thus our own victory, and I should like to congratulate most particularly the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, on the efforts he constantly exerted during that country's independence process. Today free Namibia is involved in a new struggle which is just as crucial - the struggle against underdevelopment and poverty. We hope that the international community will lend its support to Namibia in facing this challenge.

How, then, can we fail to welcome again here the freeing of Nelson Mandela and the lifting of the ban in South Africa on the liberation movements - measures that are the forerunners of the dismantling we all desire of the hateful and inhuman apartheid system. Since President De Klerk seems to be sincere in the efforts he is exerting to find a peaceful solution to a problem which for more than 40 years has aroused criticism and condemnation of his country, we must give him encouragement until apartheid is totally abolished and a multiracial South African society emerges.

Still on the subject of Africa, how can one fail to hope for an end to the fratricidal struggles which have led to so much bloodshed and have spoiled so many lives? I am thinking here particularly of Liberia. Cambodia, on which

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negotiations have now reached a decisive stage, which we are happy to welcome, certainly provides an example of the settlement of such conflicts.

The Comoros Government is also following with interest the developments on the Korean question. We hope that the high-level contacts which have taken place recently between representatives of North Korea and of South Korea will be reflected in better mutual understanding and will create the necessary conditions for a peaceful settlement of t.at problem. In accordance with the principle of universality, which is one of the fundamental features of the United Nations, we support the aspiration of the Korean people to become a Member of the United Nations and thereby contribute to the strengthening of international peace, security and co-operation.

A less violent but no less crucial problem has faced us Comorians for more than 15 years now: the question of Mayotte. We cannot fail to refer to the problem of this Comorian island, which indeed will be discussed very soon in the Assembly. For 15 years now we have been repeatedly and very objectively setting forth to the Assembly the facts on this territorial dispute which pits Comoros against France. Today, I wish to express again the determination of our President, Said Mohamed Djohar, and his coalition Government to spare no effort to bring about the reintegration of the island of Mayotte into its Comorian family.

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Firmly convinced of the justice of the claim to this part of our territory, the Government and the people of the Comoros are none the less open to all avenues that might lead to a peaceful settlement through the simple application of international law.

Is it not unfortunate that the political détente between West and East has not yet given rise to economic détente between North and South? Indeed, international economic relations are still very unfair and impose on the weakest numerous burdens that are increasingly unbearable. The hope that the benefits expected from the growth of world economic output would, through the trickle-down effect, benefit the poorer countries also, has not been realized. Given today's trends, one cannot rule out the possibility that the situation will continue to deteriorate. In such circumstances it is all the more urgent to establish increased international economic co-operation, based on the reality of the growing interdependence between national economies.

It is very important that the developed countries and the poorer countries mobilize their efforts so as to be able, in a spirit of real solidarity, to find new solutions, not only to the problem of indebtedness, which ravages the economies of the third-world countries, but also to all other problems that hinder progress towards development. It is time to put an end to pious hopes and kind words and get down to action.

As regards the resurgence of our economies, we should like to be certain that the specific measures adopted at the last special session of the General Assembly devoted to international co-operation, and those adopted at the second Paris Conference on the Least Developed Countries, really will be implemented so that we may be helped to break out of the vicious circle in which we now find ourselves because of the fluctuations in commodity prices, the constant deterioration of

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terms of trade, the strengthening of protectionism, the general contraction of the flow of financial resources to the poor countries, and the burden of debt repayment.

The problem of indebtedness, which emerged in nearly all the poor countries in the early 1980s, has now spread, and it fuels a persistent crisis, which hinders expansion, disturbs social order and increasingly threatens the political stability of poor countries. Despite constant strong efforts at adjustment and rescheduling operations, the current international financial and monetary system makes it virtually impossible for the poor countries to deal with this burden. Of course, specific measures have recently been adopted by certain States and certain institutions to alleviate the debt of the least developed countries. In this connection, we express our profound gratitude to those States, particularly France, for the gesture of solidarity that has led to the writing off of Comorian debt. But is this enough to ensure that the objectives of justice, which all of us claim to pursue, will be attained? Is it enough to reverse the violence inflicted on the weakest by extreme poverty? Are nations not yet sufficiently convinced that, once again, those most disinherited would be the first victims of today's crisis in the Gulf? What choice, what weapons, will be offered to us so that we may escape?

We realize that the improvement of our national economy calls for a greater opening-up of our country, in spite of the aggravation of the international context after the emergence of new centres of interest to the rich countries in the Committee on Aid for Development. For us, the development of South-South co-operation is becoming a pressing duty so that we may ensure that the effects of development aid are reinforced. That is why we have chosen a policy of solidarity and regional integration as an effective tool of progress. Our entry, in 1986, into the Indian Ocean Commission demonstrated the importance that the Islamic Federal Republic of the Comoros attaches to the General Assembly's recommendations

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on the need for the poor island countries to co-operate on a regional basis in order to be better able to face their own problems. It is in that spirit that the Indian Ocean Commission has adopted a strategy that calls, as a matter of priority, for the strengthening of trade, industrial co-operation, and the improvement of transport and telecommunications. If that objective is to be achieved, the Indian Ocean Commission needs the help of international financial institutions. We therefore appeal to the international community as a whole to lend its active support to our young institution.

On the home front, the Federal Islamic Republic of the Comoros has been tireless in its efforts since the election of President Said Mohammed Djohar last March. Ever since his investiture he has undertaken to work for a democratic, dynamic and open society and to struggle against corruption so that the economic and financial recovery of our country may be undertaken decisively. It is in that spirit that he entered into a dialogue with people of all political persuasions in the Comoros with a view to an amendment of our Constitution.

One of the priorities in our development strategy is protection of the environment. As Comoros is a small and overpopulated country, our survival depends on protection and on policies designed to prevent soil erosion. We are therefore happy to note that, having for too many decades ignored all the warning signals, the industrialized countries have now begun to be seriously concerned about the environment. For that reason we support fully the proposal for convening the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Brazil in 1992, in the hope that a concrete plan of action will be adopted.

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The Earth is our common heritage. All countries bear the responsibility of preserving and protecting our environment, and we should never lose sight of the fact that poverty and environmental degradation are indissolubly linked.

These issues must be dealt with in conformity with the approach taken to the Gulf crisis; that is, any solution has its basis in solidarity by all parties, with complete respect for international law. There is no magic formula: a genuine and sincere commitment by the whole international community is needed more than ever before if the goal of peace, freedom and justice for all is to be achieved.

The Comoros has confidence that our Organization is indeed capable of carrying out this noble task.

Mr. MALMIERCA PEOLI (Cuba) (interpretation from Spanish): Our delegation is very pleased to see Mr. Guido de Marco presiding over the work of this session of the General Assembly, at a time of particular importance for the destiny of humankind. The contribution of Mr. de Marco's country within the Non-Aligned Movement and his proven capabilities and experience signal success in the work we have taken on. I wish to congratulate him most warmly on behalf of the people and Government of Cuba, and also on my own behalf.

This is certainly a suitable opportunity for me to express our grateful appreciation for the work carried out by Major-General Joseph Garba as President during the last session of the General Assembly.

To the new Member States, Namibia and Liechtenstein, I extend our best wishes on their joining this great family of nations and, by so doing, making that family more universal.

The world has changed. Today the international situation is qualitatively different from what it was a year ago, when we met in this same Hall. The risk of a nuclear confrontation has diminished, along with the holocaust such a

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confrontation might entail. That is something to be welcomed. Progress is being made in the negotiations towards nuclear disarmament, negotiations which ought to be conducted with all States participating within the United Nations framework.

The tensions stemming from the so-called East-West confrontation have practically disappeared, but the peace which now prevails is not the peace for which we have always fought - real peace for all States, weak and strong, large and small, in whatever continent. We say "yes" to peace, but we want it to be a worthy peace and a peace for all. We say "yes" to détente and co-operation, but we want it for everybody, not only between East and West but between North and South as well. We say "yes" to multilateralism and the United Nations, but we demand it for everybody, large and small, nuclear and non-nuclear Powers, developed and underdeveloped, rich and poor.

We must not continue advocating détente, peace and development by pole or by latitude: these are problems of all humankind and hence they cannot be projected onto a map and then split up. For there to be peace, mere disarmament is not enough. Without development, there can be no peace either.

The world has changed, and instead of East-West and North-South contradictions we now have a world with increasing problems in the South, a world where there are no signs that the economically developed States are willing to do their duty and contribute towards the tenacious development effort of those peoples that have suffered centuries of colonial and neocolonial exploitation.

In the Middle East, where there is continuing delay in the convening of an international peace conference in which all parties, including the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) as the legitimate representative of the Palestinian peopl, would take part on an equal footing, we now see that after the end of the

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Iran-Iraq war and the beginning of a solution to the consequences of that conflict, a new situation has arisen: the occupation and annexation of the State of Kuwait by Iraq.

Cuba, in keeping with its principled policy, expressed itself in the Security Council in favour of the adoption of resolution 660 (1990) against the invasion, and similarly came out, in so many words, against the annexation of Kuwait. For Cuba, strict observance of the norms of international law is the greatest assurance that can be given to all nations that international peace and security will really be maintained in the climate proclaimed by the premises and principles of the Charter.

We have therefore constantly acted to promote a negotiated solution and avoid the outbreak of a war of incalculable scale whose immediate effects would be felt by all peoples in the region, and which would also have serious economic effects for all developing countries in general, given the importance of oil in the world economy. President Fidel Castro has contacted the Heads of State of the Arab countries, the President of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and other Heads of Government, and has given instructions for various steps to be taken within the Security Council itself.

It is not possible, however, to disregard the fact that the United States is making use of this crisis to achieve, in its supposed role as planetary policeman, its old ambition to establish itself militarily in the Gulf area and to be able to do whatever it likes with the oil wealth of the region, which is of strategic economic importance for the whole world.

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The concentration of United States naval forces and those of Western countries in that region is enormous. They seek to fulfil a military role that no one has assigned them with regard to an effective blockade of Iraq. As a result, there is the more disturbing possibility that hostilities might break out by accident or by premeditated provocation, given not only the existence of nuclear-powered vessels, but also the reported presence of nuclear payloads in some of those vessels, a fact that certainly serves to exacerbate the crisis.

The announcement by highly placed officials of the United States administration that such a military presence could be kept on for some time and that the sole effective means to get the Iraqi troops to leave Kuwait is to use military force, demands a reaction on the part of the international community, which cannot remain silent and must reject such notions. Cuba abstained in the vote on Security Council resolution 665 (1990) because we felt that its provisions would be tantamount to spreading a cloak of legality over the acts of blatant piracy that the United States navy had been carrying out in the Gulf, and over the adoption of measures not provided for in Article 41 of the Charter, which was the basis for the embargo against Iraq. Therefore, we do not accept the self-proclaimed role of policeman that the United States has assumed, nor the pressures it has been applying to prevent the sending of food and medicines to the civilian populations of Iraq and Kuwait, despite the provisions of Security Council resolution 661 (1990).

We are surprised that the United States, which spent a number of years flattening Viet Nam, bullied tiny Grenada, and most recently sent its élite troops to invade Panama - among other similar actions in its long history of interventionism - should now pose as a champion of international peace and security. But we are even more surprised that those who have repeatedly opposed

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the application of sanctions by the Security Council against Israel for its repeated acts of aggression and its occupation of Arab and Palestinian territories, should now come forward as the principal advocates of those measures. Cuba rejects the haste that has been so evident in the preparation and adoption of new resolutions, which only add to the risk of a conflagration and are clearly incompatible with the supposed desire to exhaust political and diplomatic means.

No State is entitled to set itself up as an arbiter with the right to decide when such efforts have been exhausted. The international community must not simply acquiesce in the sense of inevitability that tends to pervade the Council's resolutions. For Cuba, there can be no reasonable alternative to a negotiated political solution, which must necessarily include the restoration of the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Kuwait and the complete withdrawal of foreign forces deployed in the region. Resort to force, with all its devastating consequences for the peoples and wealth of the region, would set in motion an economic catastrophe for the countries of the third world. Even without the outbreak of war, the price of a barrel of oil has surpassed $40. What would the consequences be for the economies of the more than 100 States of the third world if actual military hostilities were to break out in the Gulf?

At the same time, we wish to reiterate that basic foodstuffs and medical assistance are fundamental human rights that must be guaranteed in all circumstances for the civilian population of Iraq and Kuwait, as well as for nationals of third States in those territories. Not even evacuation would provide a quick solution for all the citizens of third countries, because more than 500,000 Palestinian citizens will be unable to return to their homeland, which continues to be occupied by Israel.

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In numerous regions of the world, peoples continue to clamour for the establishment of peace, although the negotiating process has not yet met their legitimate aspirations.

We now have a new, unified Yemen which Cuba salutes. Through the maturity and intelligence of its peoples and Governments, Yemen has overcome the division that survived the colonial inheritance that once divided them. The new Namibia, which after a long-drawn-out but no less heroic struggle, won its independence - to which we Cubans are honoured to have contributed - can now take its rightful place among us. That is another manifestation of today's new atmosphere. There have been developments in the Cambodian conflict, and the parties appear to be moving towards an agreement. But the process is still in its early stages and has not yet crystallized.

The Government of Afghanistan is persistently and flexibly pursuing its policy of national reconciliation, despite the difficulties that one party to the conflict, with United States support, has been placing in its path, despite the Geneva Agreements. Cuba supports the just position of the Government of Afghanistan.

The question of Cyprus remains deadlocked while the country remains under military occupation. Cuba reiterates its support for the legitimate rights of the Cypriot people; for dialogue between the two communities that compose it; for the establishment of a bi-communal federal republic preserving the unity, sovereignty, independence and non-aligned status of Cyprus; and for the urgent convening of an international conference on the question of Cyprus under the auspices of the United Nations in order to resolve the matter.

We support the establishment of an independent and sovereign Sahraoui State, as well as the withdrawal of the Moroccan administration and troops from the territory of the Western Sahara.

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We reiterate our support for the people of Lebanon in its just struggle for national unity and territorial integrity.

We wish the People's Republic of China success in the process of integrating into its national sovereignty those parts of its territory and peoples that were wrested from it by colonial domination or imperialist intervention.

Korea continues to be divided, although significant steps have begun to be taken that could lead to the long-desired reunification. In that respect, we reiterate our solidarity with the just policy pursued by the People's Democratic Republic of Korea.

In Angola, where Cuba has been strictly and impeccably implementing the withdrawal of its military contingent as a result of the agreements arrived at, peace has not proved possible as a result of the actions of UNITA, which has been supported militarily and politically by the United States and continues its destabilizing actions.

In Central America, the atmosphere of tension has declined, although the people of Nicaragua, after the guns have fallen silent, is now striving to achieve domestic stability and to overcome the difficult economic legacy of the war imposed on it for so many years. In El Salvador, the process initiated between the parties, with the participation of the Secretary-General, has not been carried out fully. In Guatemala, steps continue to be taken towards a domestic solution, but with no rapid development in sight.

Cuba wishes again to place on record its support for the just demands of the Argentine people to recover its sovereignty over the Malvinas Islands and for the demands of the Government of Bolivia for a direct and useful outlet to the sea.

The South African people, which in the recent past has achieved through its difficult struggle certain social changes providing a political space for the

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forces that have represented it, has not yet succeeded in doing away with all the barriers that exist or in burying once and for all the policy of apartheid. The international community must therefore continue to advocate the maintenance of economic sanctions against South Africa. Cuba reiterates that apartheid cannot be reformed - it must be completely eradicated.

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In the Americas, the Puerto Ricans, our brethren by virtue of blood and of struggle, still do not know when their land will cease being a colonial Territory of the United States. Indeed, at the very end of the twentieth century there are attempts further to impede their progress towards self-determination by means of the so-called referendum or plebiscite the United States Government is organizing, while the conditions are being readied to continue the spread of transnational corporations and nuclear military bases through the Territory in an attempt - a vain attempt - to erase its genuine Latin American identity and its historical and cultural roots.

Notwithstanding the undoubted successes in the fight against colonialism in recent years, we must not forget that there remain more than 20 Territories with many millions of inhabitants still under colonial domination. The United Nations must redouble its efforts to make this decade the last for colonialism.

Today the United Nations is the only forum suitable for confronting the major challenges facing mankind. The question of the environment, the drug problem and the needs of children undoubtedly require in-depth universal attention to find formulas for an effective solution. In all these cases, however, everyone must assume his share of the burden; it would be wrong to allocate the principal task to the developing countries or to lay the primary responsibility upon them.

The Eighth Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, recently held in Cuba with a level of participation exceeding that of previous congresses and with results that have been described as very successful both by the United Nations and by participants, is an example of how the growing problem of crime must be confronted.

We cannot omit two basic issues: disarmament and economic questions.

We view disarmament not only as a necessity but also, first and foremost, as an imperative for peace. There has been progress - which we welcome - in the

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process between the two major nuclear Powers to reduce and eliminate nuclear weapons, and thus to remove the threat of nuclear conflict; but the danger has not yet been eliminated, and we cannot say that the progress made is irreversible.

Cuba supports the possibility of converting the present partial nuclear-test ban into a total ban, in keeping with the demands of the international community.

The failure of the recent review conference for the nuclear non-proliferation Treaty - where it was impossible to agree on the adoption of a final declaration - proves that there are still forces, in the United States in particular, which resist suspension of nuclear testing.

We welcome the fact that the negotiations on conventional-arms reduction in Europe, in accordance with the special characteristics of that region, are moving forward.

Intense work is under way on the subject of chemical weapons, but important questions remain unresolved. Cuba will continue to work in the negotiating body with a view to the swift adoption of a universal convention that will not impose limits or obstacles on the economic development of developing countries in this sphere, discriminate in any way among States parties or lead, through the retention by other States of their chemical arsenals, to weakened security for parties to the convention which do not possess chemical weapons.

In the economic sphere, the contrast between the glimmers of light on the world political scene and the shadows which generally prevail in international economic relations is very disturbing. While there is a gradual process of détente and of closer relations between the two major world Powers and between East and West, North-South relations grow ever grimmer.

In the decade that has just begun, we note that the abyss of inequality between the development levels of the industrialized countries and those of the

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underdeveloped countries continues to grow deeper, both in the economic and social sphere and in the area of science and technology.

The wrongs condemned by President Fidel Castro in this Hall in 1979 have grown out of all proportion and have over the years reached unimagined levels. Worse still, there is no prospect of a real, lasting solution: the debt crisis, the net reverse transfer of financial resources, the growing deterioration of terms of trade, protectionism and diminishing sources of credit for development add up to a situation of total economic desperation and utter social insecurity for our countries. This is beginning to manifest itself in violent outbursts of social instability.

Cuba's position on the external-debt crisis - which as President Fidel Castro has pointed out is now the main obstacle to development, the principal instrument for financial plunder and the most modern form of neocolonial dependence imposed by developed countries - is well known to the international community. There is an urgent need for a comprehensive political solution to root out this evil; it must necessarily include total cancellation of the debt of all developing countries.

One of the consequences of the debt crisis has been a constant deterioration of living standards in third-world countries. Almost 60 per cent of the economically active population is unemployed; more than 950 million people live in utter poverty; 195 million children below the age of five suffer from hunger; infant mortality is 10 times higher, on average, than it is in developed countries; 40,000 children die daily, most of them of preventable causes and of malnutrition; 900 million adults are illiterate; and hundreds of millions of people live in misery. That striking situation has caused us to dub the 1980s a lost decade for development. The longer we delay a substantive decision on this delicate problem, the more serious will be the consequences of inaction.

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Neither creditors nor debtors now doubt that the external debt of the underdeveloped countries is not only unpayable but uncollectable. The various modalities for exchanging debt for equity do not merely evidence a general acknowledgement of of that fact, but also reveal that creditors are desperately scrambling to unload at the lowest possible cost debts they know cannot be recovered. Similarly, the various proposals made by the developed West in an attempt to resolve the crisis have proved inadequate and limited in scope - so much so that one can hardly talk of a global debt strategy at all.

None the less, and bearing in mind the economic vulnerability of all our countries, Cuba is prepared to recognize and work on behalf of initiatives which, while not constituting substantive formulas, approach the question from an integrated and innovative point of view. This implies substantial debt reductions, the overall handling of all types of debt, and additional measures.

In that spirit, my Government fully supported the results of the regional conference for Latin America and the Caribbean on external debt, recently held under the auspices of the Latin American Economic System (SELA); this could be a good beginning for a serious effort to achieve a solution of the indebtedness that is crushing our peoples.

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Like the rest of the developing world, my country is confronted with an unjust and discriminatory system of international economic relations. Whatever efforts individual countries may make in one direction or another, they will always be restricted in a world in which the imbalances I have mentioned persist. Thus, Cuba reaffirms yet again the validity of the principles of the New International Economic Order. We are convinced that true economic co-operation that fulfils the needs of development and economic growth of the developing countries requires, at the very least, application of those principles in addition to such further measures as, inter alia, cancellation of the third world's external debt, elaboration of universal co-operation on environmental and development problems and an international contribution to the necessary processes of economic integration in those countries.

I cannot conclude without pointing out that, as in previous years, pressures and threats are still being directed against our people by our neighbour to the north. The Bush Administration is the eighth United States Administration that has persisted in carrying out hostile and aggressive actions against Cuba. The United States Government, in violation of international law, and particularly the 1982 Nairobi Convention, went to great lengths to carry out its project for intrusion into our television space, for the purpose of destabilization, with a pirate television station based on United States territory.

We state with pride that through our people's intelligence and tenacity, that new United States act of aggression has been thwarted at a low cost to Cuba and that the pirate signal has been eradicated from our land. We are now also beginning to eliminate radio broadcasts that are also being beamed from United States territory for the same purposes.

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None the less, the criminal economic blockade that has been imposed against us continues, along with the violation of our waters and airspace in the naval base the United States arbitrarily maintains in our country and its aggressive military manoeuvres around it.

Cuba, as in the past, reiterates its just demand for the return of land illegally occupied by the United States on our national territory. Our greatest desire is to live in peace and to use all our resources for the noble purpose of economic and social development. Nevertheless, the political blindness of the most reactionary circles in the United States leads them stubbornly to pursue their vain attempt to bring the Cuban revolution to its knees. We have said before and we say again today: the socialism being built by our people came into being as a result of its own struggle, and our people is now defending that socialism as it most valuable acquisition, since with it has come the social justice that was for so many years trampled underfoot, along with true sovereignty and national independence. That people, which has known justice, independence and liberty, will not give them up and will defend them to the very last.

For Cubans, for the 10 million men and women who work, create, build and are prepared to defend the fruits of their labours, the situation is clear: the struggle for the revolution, for socialism, is not only the struggle for a better future. It is also the only way to defend our independence and our national identity. We shall not falter in that endeavour. We are sure our struggle can only end in victory.

The PRESIDENT: We have heard the last speaker for this afternoon.

I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in exercise of the right of reply. May I remind members that, in accordance with General Assembly decision 34/401, statements in exercise of the right of reply are limited to

(The President)

10 minutes for the first intervention and to five minutes for the second and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. WATSON (United States of America): It is indeed unfortunate, but not unexpected, that I must exercise my right of reply in response to some of the statements made today by the representative of Cuba. It is indeed unfortunate, but hardly unexpected, that the positive spirit of co-operation and conciliation which has permeated the halls of this body since the first gavel fell at the opening of the session has been ignored by Cuba. As the Foreign Minister of Cuba has said, the world has changed. But apparently Cuba has not.

The contentious language and distortions put forth by the representative of Cuba fool no one. Cuba seeks to deflect attention from the failures and shortcomings of its own repressive revolution, which, after 30 years of dictatorship, have left the Cuban people still yearning for the basic human rights and freedoms now enjoyed by the vast majority of their Latin neighbours.

This evening, because of the lateness of the hour, I will address briefly only a couple of the points raised by the Foreign Minister of Cuba.

First, we object to his mention of Puerto Rico, which years ago was removed from the list of Non-Self-Governing Territories by this very General Assembly. I would only express the hope that some day the people of Cuba will enjoy the freedoms - including free elections, freedom of speech and freedom of communications from whatever sources - currently enjoyed by our citizens in Puerto Rico.

Secondly, I must take exception to the remarks of the Foreign Minister of Cuba concerning the United States actions in the Persian Gulf. As everyone in the Assembly is aware, the United States forces in the region are there at the express

(Mr. Watson, United States)

request of the Governments of Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, acting in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations. We have stated publicly that those forces of the United States in Saudi Arabia and those there at the request of Kuwait will leave as soon as requested to do so by those countries. It is also clear that there are over 20 other countries that have been requested by Saudi Arabia to provide personnel and equipment to shore up their defence against possible invasion by Iraq. The United States is by no means alone. More than a dozen countries have sent ships to engage in the naval portion of the effort to turn back the aggression by Iraq against Kuwait.

The representative of Cuba seems out of step with the solidarity and unanimity of this body in its effort to stop and roll back the aggression of Iraq against Kuwait that also threatens other States of the region, an aggression which is completely out of step with the kind of world we in this Hall are trying to forge in the post-cold-war era.

I would call on the delegation of Cuba to reflect seriously on its participation in this body. Now is the time for Cuba to begin to accept the basic principles of the United Nations and the United Nations Charter. It is time for it to put aside demagoguery and distortions and join in this new spirit of co-operation and freedom which is becoming increasingly evident throughout the world, even though - and especially as - that spirit of freedom is threatened by blatant aggression in the Persian Gulf.

Mr. LOPEZ DEL AMO (Cuba) (interpretation from Spanish): The representative of the United States said that the statement made by the Foreign Minister of Cuba was unfortunate and failed to take account of the spirit of conciliation. What is unfortunate is that the United States Government has essentially not changed its policy - not only towards the Republic of Cuba but also generally towards the peoples of the third world.

True, there have been changes in the world, and the representative of the United States says he regrets that Cuba has not kept pace with them.

Cuba is a country that is constantly developing and changing, as life itself does. What Cuba has not changed, and will not change, is its principles - the ideas whereby a small but heroic people has proved able to defend its independence in the face of the unceasing aggression of the most powerful nation on Earth.

If Cuba had been a dictatorship which denied human rights, if there had been a hostile régime in Cuba, we would not have been able to withstand all the military, economic and political acts of aggression that the United States has kept up against our country through eight consecutive administrations.

It is precisely because the Cuban revolution steered us away from the purported democratic model of the United States market economy, now praised to the skies, that we moved away from it to carry out a profound revolution which returned to each Cuban his full dignity. That is why we had the strength so victoriously to carry out major social and economic changes and to press ahead.

The representative of the United States asked why we were concerned about the presence of United States troops in the Gulf. We have many reasons to be concerned. We know from experience: United States troops reached Puerto Rico in 1898, almost a century ago, and they are still there, and they still keep that country in colonial status.

(Mr. Lopez Del Amo, Cuba)

In 1898 they reached Cuba too, and they still maintain the military base at Guantanamo Bay, on our territory, against our will.

It is not the United States Government that can give us lessons about solidarity in this forum. Cuba, through its conduct, has shown its great solidarity, as representatives of the third world present here will testify. Of course Cuba accepts the United Nations Charter and works on its behalf, because we work to secure respect for it. It is the United States Government that has violated the Charter whenever it has seen fit, without the slightest respect for it.

If there is to be a new spirit, that new spirit should come from the United States Government, which should undertake to make real changes in its foreign policy and truly to respect the principles of the Charter, abandoning its policies of expansion and domination. The United States should learn that respect for the rights of others is the root of peace, as Benito Juarez pointed out.

The meeting rose at 7.25 p.m.